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LIFE AND POEMS

OF THE

REV. GEORGE CRABBE.

VOL. IV.

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— Woodbridge

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1834.

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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF THE

REV. GEORGE CRABBE:

WITH

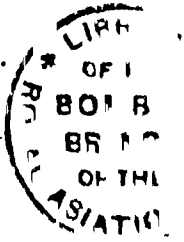
HIS LETTERS AND JOURNALS,

AND HIS LIFE,

BY HIS SON.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.



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Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
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ADVERTISEMENT.

This volume contains the last five Letters of "The Borough;" and the first eight of the "Tales," originally published in 1812.

Between the close of "The Borough," and the commencement of the "Tales," the Editor has been induced to insert a few Occasional Pieces, never before printed, which have been recently found among Mr. Crabbe's note-books, or supplied by the kind attention of his friends—and one poem of greater importance, composed in the same measure with "Sir Eustace Grey," and entitled "*The World of Dreams.*" This performance, though it may not, perhaps, have received the last polish which the Author could have given it, appears to the Editor so characteristic of his highest genius, that it could not be omitted without injustice to his memory.

Some Occasional Pieces, composed at a later period, will, in like manner, be for the first

time printed in the next volume of this collection; but the original plan, that of reserving entire for Volume VIII. *all the Poems destined by Mr. Crabbe himself for a posthumous publication*, has not been departed from.

April 14. 1834.

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THE BOROUGH.

PAULO MAJORA CANAMUS.
Virgil.

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XX.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH.

ELLEN ORFORD.

Patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. — SHAKSPEARE.

" No charms she now can boast," — 'tis true,
But other charmers wither too:
" And she is old," — the fact I know,
And old will other heroines grow;
But not like them has she been laid,
In ruin'd castle, sore dismay'd;
Where naughty man and ghostly spright
Fill'd her pure mind with awe and dread,
Stalk'd round the room, put out the light,
And shook the curtains round her bed.
No cruel uncle kept her land,
No tyrant father forced her hand;
She had no vixen virgin-aunt,
Without whose aid she could not eat,
And yet who poison'd all her meat,
With gibe and sneer and taunt.
Yet of the heroine she 'd a share, —
She saved a lover from despair,
And granted all his wish, in spite
Of what she knew and felt was right:
But, heroine then no more,
She own'd the fault, and wept and pray'd,
And humbly took the parish aid,
And dwelt among the poor.

The Widow's Cottage — Blind Ellen one — Hers not the Sorrows or Adventures of Heroines — What these are, first described — Deserted Wives; rash Lovers; courageous Damsels: in desolated Mansions; in grievous Perplexity — These Evils, however severe, of short Duration — Ellen's Story — Her Employment in Childhood — First Love; first Adventure; its miserable Termination — An Idiot Daughter — A Husband — Care in Business without Success — The Men's Despondency and its Effect — Their Children: how disposed of — One particularly unfortunate — Fate of the Daughter — Ellen keeps a School and is happy — becomes blind: loses her School — Her Consolations.

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XX.

ELLEN ORFORD. (1)

OBSERVE yon tenement, apart and small,
Where the wet pebbles shine upon the wall;
Where the low benches lean beside the door,
And the red paling bounds the space before;
Where thrift and lavender, and lad's-love (2) bloom, —
That humble dwelling is the widow's home;
There live a pair, for various fortunes known,
But the blind *Ellen* will relate her own; —

(1) The Life of Ellen Orford, though sufficiently burdened with error and misfortune, has in it little besides, which resembles those of the unhappy men in the preceding Letters, and is still more unlike that of Grimes, in a subsequent one. There is in this character cheerfulness and resignation, a more uniform piety, and an immovable trust in the aid of religion. This, with the light texture of the introductory part, will, I hope, take off from that idea of sameness, which the repetition of crimes and distresses is likely to create.

(2) The lad's or boy's love, of some counties, is the plant southern-wood, the Artemisia Abrotanum of botanists.

Yet ere we hear the story she can tell,
On prouder sorrows let us briefly dwell.

I 've often marvel'd, when, by night, by day
I 've mark'd the manners moving in my way,
And heard the language and beheld the lives
Of lass and lover, goddesses and wives,
That books, which promise much of life to give,
Should show so little how we truly live. (1)

To me it seems, their females and their men
Are but the creatures of the author's pen;
Nay, creatures borrow'd and again convey'd
From book to book—the shadows of a shade:
Life, if they 'd search, would show them many a change;
The ruin sudden, and the misery strange!
With more of grievous, base, and dreadful things,
Than novelists relate or poet sings: (2)
But they, who ought to look the world around,
Spy out a single spot in fairy-ground;
Where all, in turn, ideal forms behold,
And plots are laid and histories are told.

(1) ["That 'le vrai n'est pas toujours vraisemblable,' we do not deny; but we are prepared to insist that, while 'le vrai' is the highest recommendation of the historian of real life, the 'vraisemblable' is the only legitimate province of the novelist who aims at improving the understanding or touching the heart."— GIFFORD.]

(2) [——— "Truth is always strange—
Stranger than fiction. If it could be told,
How much would Novels gain by the exchange?" &c.— BYRON.
See *antè*, vol. ii. p. 60.]

Time have I lent—I would their debt were less—
To flow'ry pages of sublime distress;
And to the heroine's soul-distracting fears
I early gave my sixpences and tears:
Oft have I travell'd in these tender tales,
To *Darnley-Cottages* (1) and *Maple-Vales*, (2)
And watch'd the fair-one from the first-born sigh,
When Henry pass'd and gazed in passing by;
Till I beheld them pacing in the park,
Close by a coppice where 't was cold and dark;
When such affection with such fate appear'd,
Want and a father to be shunn'd and fear'd,
Without employment, prospect, cot, or cash;
That I have judged th' heroic souls were rash.

Now shifts the scene,—the fair in tower confined,
In all things suffers but in change of mind;
Now woo'd by greatness to a bed of state,
Now deeply threaten'd with a dungeon's grate;
Till, suffering much, and being tried enough,
She shines, triumphant maid!—temptation-proof.

Then was I led to vengeful monks, who mix
With nymphs and swains, and play unpriestly tricks;
Then view'd banditti who in forest wide,
And cavern vast, indignant virgins hide;
Who, hemm'd with bands of sturdiest rogues about,
Find some strange succour, and come virgins out.

(1) The title of a novel, in three volumes, written by Mrs. Elizabeth Bonhote, the author also of Bungay Castle, Ellen Woodley, &c.]

(2) [Maple Vale, or the History of Miss Sydney, was published anonymously in 1790.]

I 've watch'd a wint'ry night on castle-walls,
I 've stalk'd by moonlight through deserted halls,
And when the weary world was sunk to rest,
I 've had such sights as—may not be express'd. (1)

Lo! that château, the western tower decay'd,
The peasants shun it,—they are all afraid;
For there was done a deed!—could walls reveal,
Or timbers tell it, how the heart would feel!
Most horrid was it:—for, behold, the floor
Has stain of blood, and will be clean no more:
Hark to the winds! which through the wide saloon
And the long passage send a dismal tune,—
Music that ghosts delight in;—and now heed
Yon beauteous nymph, who must unmask the deed;

(1) ["This species of composition cannot be traced higher than the Castle of Otranto, by Horace Walpole. The following curious account of the origin and composition of this romance is given by the author himself, in a letter to a friend:—'Shall I confess to you what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning, in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled, like mine, with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase, I saw a gigantic hand, in armour. In the evening, I sat down and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it. Add, that I was very glad to think of any thing rather than politics. In short, I was so impressed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months, that one evening I wrote from the time I had drunk tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hand and fingers were so weary, that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking, in the middle of a paragraph.'—The work is declared by Mr. Walpole to be an attempt to blend the ancient romance and modern novel; but if by the ancient romance be meant the tales of chivalry, the extravagance of the Castle of Otranto has no resemblance to their machinery. What analogy have skulls or skeletons, sliding panels, damp vaults, trap doors, and dismal apartments, to the tented field of chivalry and its airy enchantments?"—DUNLOP.]

See! with majestic sweep she swims alone,
Through rooms, all dreary, guided by a groan:
Though windows rattle, and though tap'stries shake,
And the feet falter every step they take,
'Mid moans and gibing sprights she silent goes,
To find a something, which will soon expose
The villanies and wiles of her determined foes:
And, having thus adventured, thus endured,
Fame, wealth, and lover, are for life secured. (1)

Much have I fear'd, but am no more afraid,
When some chaste beauty, by some wretch betray'd,
Is drawn away with such distracted speed,
That she anticipates a dreadful deed:

(1) ["There is a certain class of novelists in whose drama nothing is real: their scenes are fancy, and their actors mere essences. The hero and heroine are generally paragons of courage, beauty, and virtue; they reside in such castles as never were built, in the midst of such forests as never grew, infested by such hordes of robbers and murderers as were never collected together. In the small number of those novels which have any plan or meaning, all is modelled on a certain principle, and every event predisposed to conduce to a certain object. Virtue is to be always persecuted, never overpowered, and, at the close, invariably rewarded; while vice, on the other hand, triumphant through all the previous scenes, is sure to be immolated, in the last, by the sword of retribution. This kind of novel is useless: the lessons it teaches are mere enthusiasm and romance: for the every-day occurrences of life, there is inculcated a magnanimous contempt; and the mind, taught to neglect or despise the common duties of society, is either wound up to a pitch of heroism which never can be tried, or fixed in erroneous principles of morality and duty from which it is not easily reclaimed." — GIFFORD.

"On the contrary, in Sidney Biddulph, by Mrs. Sheridan, every affliction is accumulated on the innocent heroine, in order to show that neither prudence nor foresight, nor the best disposition of the human heart, are sufficient to defend from the evils of life. This work, we are told, was written in opposition to the moral system, then fashionable, that virtue and happiness are constant concomitants, or, as expressed by Congreve, in the conclusion of the Mourning Bride, —

'That blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And, though a late, a sure reward succeeds.'" — DUNLOP.]

" Not so do I—Let solid walls impound
The captive fair, and dig a moat around;
Let there be brazen locks and bars of steel,
And keepers cruel, such as never feel;
With not a single note the purse supply,
And when she begs, let men and maids deny;
Be windows those from which she dares not fall,
And help so distant, 't is in vain to call;
Still means of freedom will some power devise,
And from the baffled ruffian snatch his prize.

To Northern Wales, in some sequester'd spot,
I 've follow'd fair *Louisa* to her cot; (1)
Where, then a wretched and deserted bride,
The injured fair-one wished from man to hide;
Till by her fond repenting Belville found,
By some kind chance—the straying of a hound,
He at her feet craved mercy, nor in vain,
For the relenting dove flew back again.
There 's something rapturous in distress, or, oh!
Could *Clementina* bear her lot of wo?
Or what she underwent could maiden undergo?
The day was fix'd; for so the lover sigh'd,"
So knelt and craved, he could n't be denied;
When, tale most dreadful! every hope adieu,—
For the fond lover is the brother too:
All other griefs abate; this monstrous grief
Has no remission, comfort, or relief;

"(1) [Louisa, or the Cottage on the Moor, by Mrs. Helme; who also wrote The Farmer of Inglewood Forest, St. Clair of the Isles, and many other novels.]

Four ample volumes, through each page disclose,—
Good Heaven protect us! only woes on woes;
Till some strange means afford a sudden view
Of some vile plot, and every wo adieu! (1)

Now, should we grant these beauties all endure
Severest pangs, they 've still the speediest cure;
Before one charm be wither'd from the face,
Except the bloom, which shall again have place,
In wedlock ends each wish, in triumph all disgrace;
And life to come, we fairly may suppose,
One light, bright contrast to these wild dark woes.

These let us leave, and at her sorrows look,
Too often seen, but seldom in a book;
Let her who felt, relate them;—on her chair
The heroine sits—in former years, the fair,
Now aged and poor; but *Ellen Orford* knows
That we should humbly take what Heav'n bestows.

" My father died—again my mother wed,
" And found the comforts of her life were fled;

(1) As this incident points out the work alluded to, I wish it to be remembered, that the gloomy tenour, the querulous melancholy of the story, is all I censure. The language of the writer is often animated, and is, I believe, correct; the characters well drawn, and the manners described from real life; but the perpetual occurrence of sad events, the protracted list of teasing and perplexing mischances, joined with much waspish invective, unallayed by pleasantry or sprightliness, and these continued through many hundred pages, render publications, intended for amusement and executed with ability, heavy and displeasing:—you find your favourite persons happy in the end; but they have teased you so much with their perplexities by the way, that you were frequently disposed to quit them in their distresses.

" Her angry husband, vex'd through half his years
" By loss and troubles, fill'd her soul with fears:
" Their children many, and 't was my poor place
" To nurse and wait on all the infant-race;
" Labour and hunger were indeed my part,
" And should have strengthen'd an erroneous heart.

" Sore was the grief to see him angry come,
" And teased with business, make distress at home:
" The father's fury and the children's cries
" I soon could bear, but not my mother's sighs;
" For she look'd back on comforts, and would say,
" ' I wrong'd thee, Ellen,' and then turn away:
" Thus, for my age's good, my youth was tried,
" And this my fortune till my mother died.

" So, amid sorrow much and little cheer—
" A common case—I pass'd my twentieth year;
" For these are frequent evils; thousands share
" An equal grief—the like domestic care.

" Then in my days of bloom, of health and youth,
" One, much above me, vow'd his love and truth:
" We often met, he dreading to be seen, [mean;
" And much I question'd what such dread might
" Yet I believed him true; my simple heart
" And undirected reason took his part.

" Can he who loves me, whom I love, deceive?
" Can I such wrong of one so kind believe,
" Who lives but in my smile, who trembles when I grieve?

" He dared not marry, but we met to prove
" What sad encroachments and deceits has love:
" Weak that I was, when he, rebuked, withdrew,
" I let him see that I was wretched too;
" When less my caution, I had still the pain
" Of his or mine own weakness to complain.

" Happy the lovers class'd alike in life,
" Or happier yet the rich endowing wife;
" But most aggrieved the fond believing maid;
" Of her rich lover tenderly afraid:
" You judge th' event; for grievous was my fate,
" Painful to feel, and shameful to relate:
" Ah! sad it was my burthen to sustain,
" When the least misery was the dread of pain;
" When I have grieving told him my disgrace,
" And plainly mark'd indifference in his face.

" Hard! with these fears and terrors to behold
" The cause of all, the faithless lover, cold;
" Impatient grown at every wish denied,
" And barely civil, soothed and gratified;
" Peevish when urged to think of vows so strong,
" And angry when I spake of crime and wrong.
" All this I felt, and still the sorrow grew,
" Because I felt that I deserved it too,
" And begg'd my infant stranger to forgive
" The mother's shame, which in herself must live.

" When known that shame, I, soon expell'd from home,
" With a frail sister shared a hovel's gloom;

" There barely fed—(what could I more request?)
" My infant slumberer sleeping at my breast,
" I from my window saw his blooming bride,
" And my seducer smiling at her side;
" Hope lived till then; I sank upon the floor,
" And grief and thought and feeling were no more:
" Although revived, I judged that life would close,
" And went to rest, to wonder that I rose:
" My dreams were dismal,—wheresoe'er I stray'd,
" I seem'd ashamed, alarm'd, despised, betray'd;
" Always in grief, in guilt, disgraced, forlorn,
" Mourning that one so weak, so vile, was born;
" The earth a desert, tumult in the sea,
" The birds affrighten'd fled from tree to tree,
" Obscured the setting sun, and every thing like me:
" But Heav'n had mercy, and my need at length
" Urged me to labour, and renew'd my strength.
" I strove for patience as a sinner must,
" Yet felt th' opinion of the world unjust:
" There was my lover, in his joy esteem'd,
" And I, in my distress, as guilty deem'd;
" Yet sure, not all the guilt and shame belong
" To her who feels and suffers for the wrong:
" The cheat at play may use the wealth he 's won,
" But is not honour'd for the mischief done;
" The cheat in love may use each villain art,
" And boast the deed that breaks the victim's heart.

" Four years were past; I might again have found
" Some erring wish, but for another wound:

" Lovely my daughter grew, her face was fair,
" But no expression ever brighten'd there;
" I doubted long, and vainly strove to make
" Some certain meaning of the words she spake;
" But meaning there was none, and I survey'd
" With dread the beauties of my idiot-maid.
" Still I submitted; — Oh! 't is meet and fit
" In all we feel to make the heart submit;
" Gloomy and calm my days, but I had then,
" It seem'd, attractions for the eyes of men;
" The sober master of a decent trade
" O'erlook'd my errors, and his offer made;
" Reason assented: — true, my heart denied,
" ' But thou,' I said, ' shalt be no more my guide.

" When wed, our toil and trouble, pains and care,
" Of means to live procured us humble share;
" Five were our sons, — and we, though careful, found
" Our hopes declining as the year came round:
" For I perceived, yet would not soon perceive,
" My husband stealing from my view to grieve:
" Silent he grew, and when he spoke he sigh'd,
" And surly look'd, and peevishly replied:
" Pensive by nature, he had gone of late
" To those who preach'd of destiny and fate,
" Of things fore-doom'd, and of election-grace,
" And how in vain we strive to run our race;
" That all by works and moral worth we gain
" Is to perceive our care and labour vain;
" That still the more we pay, our debts the more remain:

" That he who feels not the mysterious call,
" Lies bound in sin, still grov'ling from the fall.
" My husband felt not:—our persuasion, prayer,
" And our best reason, darken'd his despair;
" His very nature changed; he now reviled
" My former conduct,—he reproach'd my child:
" He talked of bastard slips, and cursed his bed,
" And from our kindness to concealment fled;
" For ever to some evil change inclined,
" To every gloomy thought he lent his mind,
" Nor rest would give to us, nor rest himself could find;
" His son suspended saw him, long bereft
" Of life, nor prospect of revival left.

" With him died all our prospects, and once more
" I shared th' allotments of the parish poor;
" They took my children too, and this I know,
" Was just and lawful, but I felt the blow:
" My idiot-maid and one unhealthy boy
" Were left, a mother's misery and her joy.

" Three sons I follow'd to the grave, and one —
" Oh! can I speak of that unhappy son?
" Would all the memory of that time were fled,
" And all those horrors, with my child, were dead!
" Before the world seduced him, what a grace
" And smile of gladness shone upon his face!
" Then, he had knowledge; finely would he write;
" Study to him was pleasure and delight;

" Great was his courage, and but few could stand
" Against the sleight and vigour of his hand;
" The maidens loved him; — when he came to die,
" No, not the coldest could suppress a sigh:
" Here I must cease — how can I say, my child
" Was by the bad of either sex beguiled?
" Worst of the bad — they taught him that the laws
" Made wrong and right; there was no other cause,
" That all religion was the trade of priests,
" And men, when dead, must perish like the beasts:—
" And he, so lively and so gay before ——
" Ah! spare a mother — I can tell no more.

" Int'rest was made that they should not destroy
" The comely form of my deluded boy—
" But pardon came not; damp the place and deep
" Where he was kept, as they'd a tiger keep;
" For he, unhappy! had before them all
" Vow'd he 'd escape, whatever might befall.

" He'd means of dress, and dress'd beyond his means,
" And so to see him in such dismal scenes,
" I cannot speak it — cannot bear to tell
" Of that sad hour — I heard the passing bell!

" Slowly they went; he smiled, and look'd so smart,
" Yet sure he shudder'd when he saw the cart,
" And gave a look — until my dying day,
" That look will never from my mind away:

" Oft as I sit, and ever in my dreams,
" I see that look, and they have heard my screams.

" Now let me speak no more — yet all declared
" That one so young, in pity, should be spared,
" And one so manly; — on his graceful neck,
" That chains of jewels may be proud to deck,
" To a small mole a mother's lips have press'd, —
" And there the cord — my breath is sore oppress'd.

" I now can speak again: — my elder boy
" Was that year drown'd, — a seaman in a hoy:
" He left a numerous race; of these would some
" In their young troubles to my cottage come,
" And these I taught — an humble teacher I —
" Upon their heavenly Parent to rely.

" Alas! I needed such reliance more:
" My idiot-girl, so simply gay before,
" Now wept in pain; some wretch had found a time,
" Depraved and wicked, for that coward-crime;
" I had indeed my doubt, but I suppress'd
" The thought that day and night disturb'd my rest;
" She and that sick-pale brother — but why strive
" To keep the terrors of that time alive?

" The hour arrived, the new, th' undreaded pain,
" That came with violence, and yet came in vain.
" I saw her die: her brother too is dead;
" Nor own'd such crime — what is it that I dread?

" The parish aid withdrawn, I look'd around,
" And in my school a bless'd subsistence found —
" My winter-calm of life: to be of use
" Would pleasant thoughts and heavenly hopes produce;
" I loved them all; it soothed me to presage
" The various trials of their riper age,
" Then dwell on mine, and bless the Power who gave
" Pains to correct us, and remorse to save.

" Yes! these were days of peace, but they are past, —
" A trial came, I will believe, a last;
" I lost my sight, and my employment gone,
" Useless I live, but to the day live on;
" Those eyes, which long the light of heaven enjoy'd,
" Were not by pain, by agony destroy'd:
" My senses fail not all; I speak, I pray;
" By night my rest, my food I take by day;
" And, as my mind looks cheerful to my end,
" I love mankind, and call my GOD my friend."

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XXI.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH.

ABEL KEENE.

Cœpis meliùs quàm desines: ultima primis
Cedunt. Dissimiles: hic vir et ille puer.
OVID. *Deïanira Herculi.* (1)

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. — *Epistle to Timothy.*

(1) [Your last deeds differ from your first success,
The infant makes the man appear the less.]

Abel, a poor Man, Teacher of a School of the lower Order; is placed in the Office of a Merchant; is alarmed by Discourses of the Clerks; unable to reply; becomes a Convert; dresses, drinks, and ridicules his former Conduct — The Remonstrance of his Sister, a devout Maiden — Its Effect — The Merchant dies — Abel returns to Poverty unpitied; but relieved — His abject Condition — His Melancholy — He wanders about: is found — His own Account of himself, and the Revolutions in his Mind.

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XXI.

ABEL KEENE.

A QUIET, simple man was *Abel Keene*,
He meant no harm, nor did he often mean:
He kept a school of loud rebellious boys,
And growing old, grew nervous with the noise;
When a kind Merchant hired his useful pen,
And made him happiest of accompting men;
With glee he rose to every easy day,
When half the labour brought him twice the pay.

There were young clerks, and there the merchant's son,
Choice spirits all, who wish'd him to be one;
It must, no question, give them lively joy,
Hopes long indulged to combat and destroy;.
At these they levell'd all their skill and strength,—
He fell not quickly, but he fell at length:
They quoted books, to him both bold and new,
And scorn'd as fables all he held as true;

" Such monkish stories, and such nursery lies,"
That he was struck with terror and surprise.

" What! all his life had he the laws obey'd,
" Which they broke through and were not once
afraid?
" Had he so long his evil passions check'd,
" And yet at last had nothing to expect?
" While they their lives in joy and pleasure led,
" And then had nothing, at the end, to dread?
" Was all his priest with so much zeal convey'd,
" A part! a speech! for which the man was paid?
" And were his pious books, his solemn prayers,
" Not worth one tale of the admired Voltaire's?
" Then was it time, while yet some years remain'd,
" To drink untroubled and to think unchain'd,
" And on all pleasures, which his purse could give,
" Freely to seize, and while he lived, to live."

Much time he pass'd in this important strife,
The bliss or bane of his remaining life;
For converts all are made with care and grief,
And pangs attend the birth of unbelief;
Nor pass they soon;—with awe and fear he took
The flowery way, and cast back many a look.

The youths applauded much his wise design,
With weighty reasoning o'er their evening wine;
And much in private 'twould their mirth improve,
To hear how Abel spake of life and love;
To hear him own what grievous pains it cost,
Ere the old saint was in the sinner lost,

Ere his poor mind, with every deed alarm'd,
By wit was settled, and by vice was charm'd.

For Abel enter'd in his bold career,
Like boys on ice, with pleasure and with fear;
Lingering, yet longing for the joy, he went,
Repenting now, now dreading to repent:
With awkward pace, and with himself at war,
Far gone, yet frighten'd that he went so far;
Oft for his efforts he'd solicit praise,
And then proceed with blunders and delays:
The young more aptly passion's calls pursue,
But age and weakness start at scenes so new,
And tremble, when they've done, for all they dared
to do.

At length example Abel's dread removed,
With small concern he sought the joys he loved;
Not resting here, he claim'd his share of fame,
And first their votary, then their wit became;
His jest was bitter and his satire bold,
When he his tales of formal brethren told;
What time with pious neighbours he discuss'd,
Their boasted treasure and their boundless trust:
"Such were our dreams," the jovial elder cried;
"Awake and live," his youthful friends replied.

Now the gay Clerk a modest drab despised,
And clad him smartly as his friends advised;
So fine a coat upon his back he threw,
That not an alley-boy old Abel knew;

Broad polish'd buttons blazed that coat upon,
And just beneath the watch's trinkets shone,—
A splendid watch, that pointed out the time,
To fly from business and make free with crime;
The crimson waistcoat and the silken hose
Rank'd the lean man among the Borough beaux:
His raven hair he cropp'd with fierce disdain,
And light elastic locks encased his brain:
More pliant pupil who could hope to find,
So deck'd in person and so changed in mind?

When Abel walked the streets, with pleasant mien
He met his friends, delighted to be seen;
And when he rode along the public way,
No beau so gaudy, and no youth so gay.

His pious sister, now an ancient maid,
For Abel fearing, first in secret pray'd;
Then thus in love and scorn her notions she convey'd.

"Alas! my brother! can I see thee pace
"Hoodwink'd to hell, and not lament thy case,
"Nor stretch my feeble hand to stop thy headlong race?
"Lo! thou art bound; a slave in Satan's chain,
"The righteous Abel turn'd the wretched Cain;
"His brother's blood against the murderer cried,
"Against thee thine, unhappy suicide!
"Are all our pious nights and peaceful days,
"Our evening readings and our morning praise,
"Our spirits' comfort in the trials sent,
"Our hearts' rejoicings in the blessings lent,

" All that o'er grief a cheering influence shed,
" Are these for ever and for ever fled?

" When, in the years gone by, the trying years,
" When faith and hope had strife with wants and fears,
" Thy nerves have trembled till thou couldst not eat
" (Dress'd by this hand) thy mess of simple meat;
" When, grieved by fastings, gall'd by fates severe,
" Slow pass'd the days of the successless year;
" Still in these gloomy hours, my brother then
" Had glorious views, unseen by prosperous men:
" And when thy heart has felt its wish denied,
" What gracious texts hast thou to grief applied;
" Till thou hast enter'd in thine humble bed,
" By lofty hopes and heavenly musings fed;
" Then I have seen thy lively looks express
" The spirit's comforts in the man's distress.

" Then didst thou cry, exulting, 'Yes, 'tis fit,
" 'Tis meet and right, my heart! that we submit:'
" And wilt thou, Abel, thy new pleasures weigh
" Against such triumphs?—Oh! repent and pray.

" What are thy pleasures?—with the gay to sit,
" And thy poor brain torment for awkward wit;
" All thy good thoughts (thou hat'st them) to restrain,
" And give a wicked pleasure to the vain;
" Thy long, lean frame by fashion to attire,
" That lads may laugh and wantons may admire;

" To raise the mirth of boys, and not to see,
" Unhappy maniac! that they laugh at thee.

" These boyish follies, which alone the boy
" Can idly act or gracefully enjoy,
" Add new reproaches to thy fallen state,
" And make men scorn what they would only hate.

" What pains, my brother, dost thou take to prove
" A taste for follies which thou canst not love!
" Why do thy stiffening limbs the steed bestride—
" That lads may laugh to see thou canst not ride?
" And why (I feel the crimson tinge my cheek)
" Dost thou by night in Diamond-Alley sneak?

" Farewell! the parish will thy sister keep,
" Where she in peace shall pray and sing and sleep,
" Save when for thee she mourns, thou wicked, wandering sheep!
" When youth is fallen, there's hope the young may rise,
" But fallen age for ever hopeless lies;
" Torn up by storms, and placed in earth once more,
" The younger tree may sun and soil restore;
" But when the old and sapless trunk lies low,
" No care or soil can former life bestow;
" Reserved for burning is the worthless tree—
" And what, O Abel! is reserved for thee?"

These angry words our hero deeply felt,
Though hard his heart, and indisposed to melt!

To gain relief he took a glass the more,
And then went on as careless as before;
Thenceforth, uncheck'd, amusements he partook,
And (save his ledger) saw no decent book;
Him found the Merchant punctual at his task,
And that perform'd, he'd nothing more to ask;
He cared not how old Abel play'd the fool,
No master he, beyond the hours of school:
Thus they proceeding, had their wine and joke,
Till merchant Dixon felt a warning stroke,
And, after struggling half a gloomy week,
Left his poor Clerk another friend to seek.

Alas! the son, who led the saint astray,
Forgot the man whose follies made him gay;
He cared no more for Abel in his need,
Than Abel cared about his hackney steed;
He now, alas! had all his earnings spent,
And thus was left to languish and repent;
No school nor clerkship found he in the place,
Now lost to fortune, as before to grace.

For town-relief the grieving man applied,
And begg'd with tears what some with scorn denied;
Others look'd down upon the glowing vest,
And frowning, ask'd him at what price he dress'd?
Happy for him his country's laws are mild,
They must support him, though they still reviled;
Grieved, abject, scorn'd, insulted, and betray'd,
Of God unmindful, and of man afraid,—
No more he talk'd; 'twas pain, 't was shame to speak,
His heart was sinking, and his frame was weak.

His sister died with such serene delight,
He once again began to think her right;
Poor like himself, the happy spinster lay,
And sweet assurance bless'd her dying-day:
Poor like the spinster, he, when death was nigh,
Assured of nothing, felt afraid to die.
The cheerful clerks who sometimes pass'd the door,
Just mention'd "Abel!" and then thought no more.
So Abel, pondering on his state forlorn,
Look'd round for comfort, and was chased by scorn.
And now we saw him on the beach reclined,
Or causeless walking in the wintery wind;
And when it raised a loud and angry sea,
He stood and gazed, in wretched reverie:
He heeded not the frost, the rain, the snow,
Close by the sea he walk'd alone and slow:
Sometimes his frame through many an hour he spread
Upon a tombstone, moveless as the dead;
And was there found a sad and silent place,
There would he creep with slow and measured pace:
Then would he wander by the river's side,
And fix his eyes upon the falling tide;
The deep dry ditch, the rushes in the fen,
And mossy crag-pits were his lodgings then:
There, to his discontented thought a prey,
The melancholy mortal pined away.

The neighb'ring poor at length began to speak
Of Abel's ramblings — he'd been gone a week;
They knew not where, and little care they took
For one so friendless and so poor to look.

At last a stranger, in a pedlar's shed,
Beheld him hanging—he had long been dead.
He left a paper, penn'd at sundry times,
Entitled thus—"My Groanings and my Crimes!"

"I was a christian man, and none could lay
"Aught to my charge; I walk'd the narrow way:
"All then was simple faith, serene and pure,
"My hope was steadfast and my prospects sure;
"Then was I tried by want and sickness sore,
"But these I clapp'd my shield of faith before,
"And cares and wants and man's rebukes I bore:
"Alas! new foes assail'd me; I was vain,
"They stung my pride and they confused my brain:
"Oh! these deluders! with what glee they saw
"Their simple dupe transgress the righteous law;
"'Twas joy to them to view that dreadful strife,
"When faith and frailty warr'd for more than life;
"So with their pleasures they beguiled the heart,
"Then with their logic they allay'd the smart;
"They proved (so thought I then) with reasons strong,
"That no man's feelings ever lead him wrong:
"And thus I went, as on the varnish'd ice,
"The smooth career of unbelief and vice.
"Oft would the youths, with sprightly speech and bold,
"Their witty tales of naughty priests unfold;
"'Twas all a craft,' they said, 'a cunning trade,
"'Not she the priests, but priests Religion made;'
"So I believed:"—No, Abel! to thy grief:
So thou relinquish'dst all that was belief:—

" I grew as very flint, and when the rest
" Laugh'd at devotion, I enjoy'd the jest;
" But this all vanish'd like the morning-dew,
" When unemploy'd, and poor again I grew;
" Yea! I was doubly poor, for I was wicked too.

" The mouse that trespass'd and the treasure stole,
" Found his lean body fitted to the hole;
" Till, having fatted, he was forced to stay,
" And, fasting, starve his stolen bulk away:
" Ah! worse for me — grown poor, I yet remain
" In sinful bonds, and pray and fast in vain.

" At length I thought, although these friends of sin
" Have spread their net, and caught their prey therein;
" Though my hard heart could not for mercy call,
" Because, though great my grief, my faith was small;
" Yet, as the sick on skilful men rely,
" The soul diseased may to a doctor fly.

" A famous one there was, whose skill had wrought
" Cures past belief, and him the sinners sought;
" Numbers there were defiled by mire and filth,
" Whom he recover'd by his goodly tilth:
" ' Come then,' I said, ' let me the man behold,
" ' And tell my case' — I saw him and I told.

" With trembling voice, ' Oh! reverend sir,' I said,
" ' I once believed, and I was then misled;
" ' And now such doubts my sinful soul beset,
" ' I dare not say that I'm a Christian yet;

" ' Canst thou, good sir, by thy superior skill,
" ' Inform my judgment and direct my will?
" ' Ah! give thy cordial; let my soul have rest,
" ' And be the outward man alone distress'd;
" ' For at my state I tremble.' — ' Tremble more,'
" Said the good man, ' and then rejoice therefore;
" ' 'Tis good to tremble; prospects then are fair,
" ' When the lost soul is plunged in deep despair:
" ' Once thou wert simply honest, just, and pure,
" ' Whole, as thou thought'st, and never wish'd a cure:
" ' Now thou hast plunged in folly, shame, disgrace;
" ' Now thou 'rt an object meet for healing grace;
" ' No merit thine, no virtue, hope, belief,
" ' Nothing hast thou, but misery, sin, and grief,
" ' The best, the only titles to relief.'

" ' What must I do,' I said, ' my soul to free?' —
" ' Do nothing, man; it will be done for thee.' —
" ' But must I not, my reverend guide, believe?' —
" ' If thou art call'd, thou wilt the faith receive:' —
" ' But I repent not.' — Angry he replied,
" ' If thou art call'd, thou needest nought beside:
" ' Attend on us, and if 't is Heaven's decree,
" ' The call will come, — if not, ah! wo for thee.'

" There then I waited, ever on the watch,
" A spark of hope, a ray of light to catch;
" His words fell softly like the flakes of snow,
" But I could never find my heart o'erflow:
" He cried aloud, till in the flock began
" The sigh, the tear, as caught from man to man;

" They wept and they rejoiced, and there was I
" Hard as a flint, and as the desert dry:
" To me no tokens of the call would come,
" I felt my sentence, and received my doom;
" But I complain'd — ' Let thy repinings cease,
" ' Oh! man of sin, for they thy guilt increase;
" ' It bloweth where it listeth; — die in peace.'
" — ' In peace, and perish? ' I replied; ' impart
" ' Some better comfort to a burthen'd heart.' —
" ' Alas!' the priest return'd, ' can I direct
" ' The heavenly call? —Do I proclaim th' elect?
" ' Raise not thy voice against th' Eternal will,
" ' But take thy part with sinners, and be still. (1)

(1) In a periodical work [the Eclectic Review for June, 1810,] the preceding dialogue is pronounced to be a most abominable caricature, if meant to be applied to Calvinists in general, and greatly distorted, if designed for an individual: now the author, in his preface, has declared, that he takes not upon him the censure of any sect or society for their opinions; and the lines themselves evidently point to an individual, whose sentiments they very fairly represent, without any distortion whatsoever. In a pamphlet entitled " A Cordial for a Sin-despairing Soul," originally written by a teacher of religion, and lately republished by another teacher of greater notoriety, the reader is informed that after he had full assurance of his salvation, the Spirit entered particularly into the subject with him; and, among many other matters of like nature, assured him that " his sins were fully and freely forgiven, as if they had never been committed; not for any act done by him, whether believing in Christ, or repenting of sin; nor yet for the sorrows and miseries he endured, nor for any service he should be called upon in his militant state, but for his own name and for his glory s sake," &c. And the whole drift and tenour of the book is to the same purpose, viz. the uselessness of all religious duties, such as prayer, contrition, fasting, and good works: he shows the evil done by reading such books as the Whole Duty of Man, and the Practice of Piety; and complains heavily of his relation, an Irish bishop, who wanted him to join with the household in family prayer; in fact, the whole work inculcates that sort of quietism which this dialogue alludes to, and that without any recommendation of attendance on the teachers of the Gospel, but rather holding forth encouragement to the supineness of man's nature; by the information that he in vain looks for acceptance by the employment of his talents, and that his hopes of glory are rather extinguished than raised by any application to the means of grace.

" Alas, for me! no more the times of peace
" Are mine on earth—in death my pains may cease.

" Foes to my soul! ye young seducers, know,
" What serious ills from your amusements flow;
" Opinions, you with so much ease profess,
" O'erwhelm the simple and their minds oppress:
" Let such be happy, nor with reasons strong,
" That make them wretched, prove their notions wrong;
" Let them proceed in that they deem the way,
" Fast when they will, and at their pleasure pray:
" Yes, I have pity for my brethren's lot,
" And so had Dives, but it help'd him not:
" And is it thus?—I 'm full of doubts:—Adieu!
" Perhaps his reverence is mistaken too." (1)

(1) It has been a subject of greater vexation to me than such trifle ought to be, that I could not, without destroying all appearance of arrangement, separate these melancholy narratives, and place the fallen Clerk in Office at a greater distance from the Clerk of the Parish, especially as they resembled each other in several particulars; both being tempted, seduced, and wretched. Yet are there, I conceive, considerable marks of distinction: their guilt is of different kind; nor would either have committed the offence of the other. The Clerk of the Parish could break the commandment, but he could not have been induced to have disowned an article of that creed for which he had so bravely contended, and on which he fully relied; and the upright mind of the Clerk in Office would have secured him from being guilty of wrong and robbery, though his weak and vacillating intellect could not preserve him from infidelity and profaneness. Their melancholy is nearly alike, but not its consequences. *Jachin* retained his belief, and though he hated life, he could never be induced to quit it voluntarily; but *Abel* was driven to terminate his misery in a way which the unfixedness of his religious opinions rather accelerated than retarded. I am, therefore, not without hope that the more observant of my readers will perceive many marks of discrimination in these characters.

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XXII.

THE POOR OF THE BOROUGH.

PETER GRIMES.

Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent, and every one did threat——
SHAKSPEARE. *Richard III.*

The times have been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end: but now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools. *Macbeth.*

The Father of Peter a Fisherman — Peter's early Conduct — His Grief for the old Man — He takes an Apprentice — The Boy's Suffering and Fate — A second Boy: how he died — Peter acquitted — A third Apprentice — A Voyage by Sea: the Boy does not return — Evil Report on Peter: he is tried and threatened — Lives alone — His Melancholy and incipient Madness — Is observed and visited — He escapes and is taken: is lodged in a Parish-house: Women attend and watch him — He speaks in a Delirium: grows more collected — His Account of his Feelings and visionary Terrors previous to his Death.

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XXII.

PETER GRIMES. (1)

OLD *Peter Grimes* made fishing his employ,
His wife he cabin'd with him and his boy,
And seem'd that life laborious to enjoy:
To town came quiet Peter with his fish,
And had of all a civil word and wish.
He left his trade upon the Sabbath-day,
And took young Peter in his hand to pray:
But soon the stubborn boy from care broke loose,
At first refused, then added his abuse:
His father's love he scorn'd, his power defied,
But being drunk, wept sorely when he died.

(1) [The original of Peter Grimes was an old fisherman of Aldborough, while Mr. Crabbe was practising there as a surgeon. He had a succession of apprentices from London, and a certain sum with each. As the boys all disappeared under circumstances of strong suspicion, the man was warned by some of the principal inhabitants, that if another followed in like manner, he should certainly be charged with murder.]

Yes! then he wept, and to his mind there came
Much of his conduct, and he felt the shame,—
How he had oft the good old man reviled,
And never paid the duty of a child;
How, when the father in his Bible read,
He in contempt and anger left the shed:
"It is the word of life," the parent cried;
—"This is the life itself," the boy replied;
And while old Peter in amazement stood,
Gave the hot spirit to his boiling blood:—
How he, with oath and furious speech, began
To prove his freedom and assert the man;
And when the parent check'd his impious rage,
How he had cursed the tyranny of age,—
Nay, once had dealt the sacrilegious blow
On his bare head, and laid his parent low;
The father groan'd—"If thou art old," said he,
"And hast a son—thou wilt remember me:
"Thy mother left me in a happy time,
"Thou kill'dst not her—Heav'n spares the double crime."

On an inn-settle, in his maudlin grief,
This he revolved, and drank for his relief.

Now lived the youth in freedom, but debarr'd
From constant pleasure, and he thought it hard;
Hard that he could not every wish obey,
But must awhile relinquish ale and play;
Hard! that he could not to his cards attend,
But must acquire the money he would spend.

With greedy eye he look'd on all he saw,
He knew not justice, and he laugh'd at law;
On all he mark'd, he stretch'd his ready hand;
He fish'd by water and he filch'd by land:
Oft in the night has Peter dropp'd his oar,
Fled from his boat, and sought for prey on shore;
Oft up the hedge-row glided, on his back
Bearing the orchard's produce in a sack,
Or farm-yard load, tugg'd fiercely from the stack;
And as these wrongs to greater numbers rose,
The more he look'd on all men as his foes.

He built a mud-wall'd hovel, where he kept
His various wealth, and there he oft-times slept;
But no success could please his cruel soul,
He wish'd for one to trouble and control;
He wanted some obedient boy to stand
And bear the blow of his outrageous hand;
And hoped to find in some propitious hour
A feeling creature subject to his power.

Peter had heard there were in London then,—
Still have they being!—workhouse-clearing men,
Who, undisturb'd by feelings just or kind,
Would parish-boys to needy tradesmen bind:
They in their want a trifling sum would take,
And toiling slaves of piteous orphans make.

Such Peter sought, and when a lad was found,
The sum was dealt him, and the slave was bound.
Some few in town observed in Peter's trap
A boy, with jacket blue and woollen cap;

But none enquired how Peter used the rope,
Or what the bruise, that made the stripling stoop;
None could the ridges on his back behold,
None sought him shiv'ring in the winter's cold;
None put the question,—"Peter, dost thou give
"The boy his food?—What, man! the lad must live:
"Consider, Peter, let the child have bread,
"He 'll serve thee better if he 's stroked and fed."
None reason'd thus—and some, on hearing cries,
Said calmly, "Grimes is at his exercise."

Pinn'd, beaten, cold, pinch'd, threaten'd, and abused—
His efforts punish'd and his food refused,—
Awake tormented,—soon aroused from sleep,—
Struck if he wept, and yet compell'd to weep,
The trembling boy dropp'd down and strove to pray,
Received a blow, and trembling turn'd away,
Or sobb'd and hid his piteous face;—while he,
The savage master, grinn'd in horrid glee:
He 'd now the power he ever loved to show,
A feeling being subject to his blow.

Thus lived the lad, in hunger, peril, pain,
His tears despised, his supplications vain:
Compell'd by fear to lie, by need to steal,
His bed uneasy and unbless'd his meal,
For three sad years the boy his tortures bore,
And then his pains and trials were no more.

"How died he, Peter?" when the people said,
He growl'd—"I found him lifeless in his bed;"
Then tried for softer tone, and sigh'd, "Poor Sam
is dead."
Yet murmurs were there, and some questions ask'd—
How he was fed, how punish'd, and how task'd?
Much they suspected, but they little proved,
And Peter pass'd untroubled and unmoved.

Another boy with equal ease was found,
The money granted, and the victim bound;
And what his fate?—One night it chanced he
fell
From the boat's mast and perish'd in her well,
Where fish were living kept, and where the boy
(So reason'd men) could not himself destroy:—

"Yes! so it was," said Peter, "in his play,
"(For he was idle both by night and day,)
"He climb'd the main-mast and then fell below;"—
Then show'd his corpse, and pointed to the
blow:
"What said the jury?"—they were long in doubt,
But sturdy Peter faced the matter out:
So they dismiss'd him, saying at the time,
"Keep fast your hatchway when you've boys who
climb."
This hit the conscience, and he colour'd more
Than for the closest questions put before.

Thus all his fears the verdict set aside,
And at the slave-shop Peter still applied.

Then came a boy, of manners soft and mild,—
Our seamen's wives with grief beheld the child;
All thought (the poor themselves) that he was one
Of gentle blood, some noble sinner's son,
Who had, belike, deceived some humble maid,
Whom he had first seduced and then betray'd:—
However this, he seem'd a gracious lad,
In grief submissive and with patience sad.

Passive he labour'd, till his slender frame
Bent with his loads, and he at length was lame:
Strange that a frame so weak could bear so long
The grossest insult and the foulest wrong;
But there were causes—in the town they gave
Fire, food, and comfort, to the gentle slave;
And though stern Peter, with a cruel hand,
And knotted rope, enforced the rude command,
Yet he consider'd what he 'd lately felt,
And his vile blows with selfish pity dealt.

One day such draughts the cruel fisher made,
He could not vend them in his borough-trade,
But sail'd for London-mart: the boy was ill,
But ever humbled to his master's will;
And on the river, where they smoothly sail'd,
He strove with terror and awhile prevail'd;
But new to danger on the angry sea,
He clung affrighten'd to his master's knee:
The boat grew leaky and the wind was strong,
Rough was the passage and the time was long;
His liquor fail'd, and Peter's wrath arose,—
No more is known—the rest we must suppose,

Or learn of Peter:—Peter says, he "spied
"The stripling's danger and for harbour tried;
"Meantime the fish, and then th' apprentice died."

The pitying women raised a clamour round,
And weeping said, "Thou hast thy 'prentice drown'd."

Now the stern man was summon'd to the hall,
To tell his tale before the burghers all:
He gave th' account; profess'd the lad he loved,
And kept his brazen features all unmoved.

The mayor himself with tone severe replied,—
"Henceforth with thee shall never boy abide;
"Hire thee a freeman, whom thou durst not beat,
"But who, in thy despite, will sleep and eat:
"Free thou art now!—again shouldst thou appear,
"Thou 'lt find thy sentence, like thy soul, severe."

Alas! for Peter not a helping hand,
So was he hated, could he now command;
Alone he row'd his boat, alone he cast
His nets beside, or made his anchor fast;
To hold a rope or hear a curse was none,—
He toil'd and rail'd; he groan'd and swore alone.

Thus by himself compell'd to live each day,
To wait for certain hours the tide's delay;
At the same time the same dull views to see,
The bounding marsh-bank and the blighted tree;
The water only, when the tides were high,
When low, the mud half-cover'd and half-dry;

The sun-burnt tar that blisters on the planks,
And bank-side stakes in their uneven ranks;
Heaps of entangled weeds that slowly float,
As the tide rolls by the impeded boat.

When tides were neap, and, in the sultry day,
Through the tall bounding mud-banks made their way,
Which on each side rose swelling, and below
The dark warm flood ran silently and slow;
There anchoring, Peter chose from man to hide,
There hang his head, and view the lazy tide
In its hot slimy channel slowly glide;
Where the small eels that left the deeper way
For the warm shore, within the shallows play;
Where gaping muscles, left upon the mud,
Slope their slow passage to the fallen flood;—
Here dull and hopeless he 'd lie down and trace
How sidelong crabs had scrawl'd their crooked race·
Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
Of fishing gull or clanging golden-eye;
What time the sea-birds to the marsh would come,
And the loud bittern, from the bull-rush home,
Gave from the salt-ditch side the bellowing boom:
He nursed the feelings these dull scenes produce,
And loved to stop beside the opening sluice;
Where the small stream, confined in narrow bound,
Ran with a dull, unvaried, sadd'ning sound;
Where all, presented to the eye or ear,
Oppress'd the soul with misery, grief, and fear.

Besides these objects, there were places three,
Which Peter seem'd with certain dread to see;

When he drew near them he would turn from each,
And loudly whistle till he pass'd the reach. (1)

A change of scene to him brought no relief,
In town, 't was plain, men took him for a thief:
The sailors' wives would stop him in the street,
And say, "Now, Peter, thou'st no boy to beat:"
Infants at play, when they perceived him, ran,
Warning each other — "That's the wicked man:"
He growl'd an oath, and in an angry tone
Cursed the whole place and wish'd to be alone.

Alone he was, the same dull scenes in view,
And still more gloomy in his sight they grew:
Though man he hated, yet employ'd alone
At bootless labour, he would swear and groan,
Cursing the shoals that glided by the spot,
And gulls that caught them when his arts could not.

Cold nervous tremblings shook his sturdy frame,
And strange disease — he couldn't say the name;
Wild were his dreams, and oft he rose in fright,
Waked by his view of horrors in the night, —
Horrors that would the sternest minds amaze,
Horrors that demons might be proud to raise:

(1) The reaches in a river are those parts which extend from point to point. Johnson has not the word precisely in this sense; but it is very common, and, I believe, used wheresoever a navigable river can be found in this country. — ["A reach is the line or distance comprehended between any two points, or stations, on the banks of a river, wherein the current flows in a straight uninterrupted course, as Woolwich Reach," &c. — BURNEY.]

And though he felt forsaken, grieved at heart,
To think he lived from all mankind apart;
Yet, if a man approach'd, in terrors he would start.

A winter pass'd since Peter saw the town,
And summer lodgers were again come down;
These, idly curious, with their glasses spied
The ships in bay as anchor'd for the tide,—
The river's craft,—the bustle of the quay,—
And sea-port views, which landmen love to see.

One, up the river, had a man and boat
Seen day by day, now anchor'd, now afloat;
Fisher he seem'd, yet used no net nor hook;
Of sea-fowl swimming by no heed he took,
But on the gliding waves still fix'd his lazy look:
At certain stations he would view the stream,
As if he stood bewilder'd in a dream,
Or that some power had chain'd him for a time,
To feel a curse or meditate on crime.

This known, some curious, some in pity went,
And others question'd—"Wretch, dost thou repent?"
He heard, he trembled, and in fear resign'd
His boat: new terror fill'd his restless mind;
Furious he grew, and up the country ran,
And there they seized him—a distemper'd man:—
Him we received, and to a parish-bed,
Follow'd and cursed, the groaning man was led.

Here when they saw him, whom they used to shun,
A lost, lone man, so harass'd and undone;

Our gentle females, ever prompt to feel,
Perceived compassion on their anger steal;
His crimes they could not from their memories blot,
But they were grieved, and trembled at his lot.

A Priest too came, to whom his words are told;
And all the signs they shudder'd to behold.

"Look! look!" they cried; "his limbs with horror shake,
"And as he grinds his teeth, what noise they make!
"How glare his angry eyes, and yet he's not awake:
"See! what cold drops upon his forehead stand,
"And how he clenches that broad bony hand."

The Priest attending, found he spoke at times
As one alluding to his fears and crimes;
"It was the fall," he mutter'd, "I can show
"The manner how, — I never struck a blow:" —
And then aloud, — "Unhand me, free my chain;
"On oath he fell — it struck him to the brain: —
"Why ask my father? — that old man will swear
"Against my life; besides, he was n't there: —
"What, all agreed? — Am I to die to-day? —
"My Lord, in mercy give me time to pray."

Then as they watch'd him, calmer he became,
And grew so weak he could n't move his frame,
But murmuring spake—while they could see and hear
The start of terror and the groan of fear;
See the large dew-beads on his forehead rise,
And the cold death-drop glaze his sunken eyes;

Nor yet he died, but with unwonted force
Seem'd with some fancied being to discourse:
He knew not us, or with accustom'd art
He hid the knowledge, yet exposed his heart;
'Twas part confession and the rest defence,
A madman's tale, with gleams of waking sense.

"I'll tell you all," he said, "the very day
"When the old man first placed them in my way:
"My father's spirit — he who always tried
"T- -e me trouble, when he lived and died —
"W n he was gone he could not be content
' ' - my days in painful labour spent,
'ould appoint his meetings, and he made
'atch at these, and so neglect my trade.

was one hot noon, all silent, still, serene,
Nc living being had I lately seen;
"I paddled up and down and dipp'd my net,
"But (such his pleasure) I could nothing get, —
"A father's pleasure, when his toil was done,
"To plague and torture thus an only son! "
"And so I sat and look'd upon the stream,
"How it ran on, and felt as in a dream:
"But dream it was not: No! — I fix'd my eyes
"On the mid stream and saw the spirits rise:
"I saw my father on the water stand,
"And hold a thin pale boy in either hand;
"And there they glided ghastly on the top
"Of the salt flood, and never touch'd a drop:
"I would have struck them, but they knew th' intent,
"And smiled upon the oar, and down they went.

" Now, from that day, whenever I began
" To dip my net, there stood the hard old man —'
" He and those boys: I humbled me and pray'd
" They would be gone; — they heeded not, but
stay'd:
" Nor could I turn, nor would the boat go by,
" But, gazing on the spirits, there was I:
" They bade me leap to death, but I was loth to die:
" And every day, as sure as day arose,
" Would these three spirits meet me ere the close;
" To hear and mark them daily was my doom,
" And 'Come,' they said, with weak, sad voices,
'come.'
" To row away, with all my strength I tried,
" But there were they, hard by me in the tide,
" The three unbodied forms — and 'Come,' still
'come,' they cried.

" Fathers should pity — but this old man shook
" His hoary locks, and froze me by a look:
" Thrice, when I struck them, through the water came
" A hollow groan, that weaken'd all my frame:
" 'Father!' said I, 'have mercy:' — he replied,
" I know not what — the angry spirit lied, —
" 'Didst thou not draw thy knife?' said he: — 'T was
true,
" But I had pity and my arm withdrew:
" He cried for mercy, which I kindly gave,
" But he has no compassion in his grave.

" There were three places, where they ever rose, —
" The whole long river has not such as those —

" Places accursed, where, if a man remain,
" He'll see the things which strike him to the brain;
" And there they made me on my paddle lean,
" And look at them for hours;—accursed scene!
" When they would glide to that smooth eddy-space,
" Then bid me leap and join them in the place;
" And at my groans each little villain sprite
" Enjoy'd my pains and vanish'd in delight.

" In one fierce summer-day, when my poor brain
" Was burning hot, and cruel was my pain,
" Then came this father-foe, and there he stood
" With his two boys again upon the flood:
" There was more mischief in their eyes, more glee,
" In their pale faces when they glared at me: (1)
" Still did they force me on the oar to rest,
" And when they saw me fainting and oppress'd,
" He, with his hand, the old man, scoop'd the flood,
" And there came flame about him mix'd with blood;
" He bade me stoop and look upon the place,
" Then flung the hot-red liquor in my face;
" Burning it blazed, and then I roar'd for pain,
" I thought the demons would have turn'd my brain.

" Still there they stood, and forced me to behold
" A place of horrors — they can not be told —

(1) ["Continuò templum, et violati numinis aras," &c.
JUV. *Sat.* xiii.

——— " sudden before his eyes,
The violated fane and altar rise;
And (what disturbs him most) that injured shade,
In more than mortal majesty array'd,
Frowns on the wretch, alarms his treacherous rest,
And wrings the dreadful secret from his breast." — GIFFORD.]

" Where the flood open'd, there I heard the shriek
" Of tortured guilt — no earthly tongue can speak:
" ' All days alike ! for ever !' did they say,
" ' And unremitted torments every day'—
" Yes, so they said "—But here he ceased, and gazed
On all around, affrighten'd and amazed;
And still he tried to speak, and look'd in dread
Of frighten'd females gathering round his bed;
Then dropp'd exhausted, and appear'd at rest,
Till the strong foe the vital powers possess'd;
Then with an inward, broken voice he cried,
" Again they come," and mutter'd as he died. (1)

(1) The character of Grimes, his obduracy and apparent want of feeling, his gloomy kind of misanthropy, the progress of his madness, and the horrors of his imagination, I must leave to the judgment and observation of my readers. The mind here exhibited is one untouched by pity, unstung by remorse, and uncorrected by shame: yet is this hardihood of temper and spirit broken by want, disease, solitude, and disappointment; and he becomes the victim of a distempered and horror-stricken fancy. It is evident, therefore, that no feeble vision, no half-visible ghost, not the momentary glance of an unbodied being, nor the half-audible voice of an invisible one, would be created by the continual workings of distress on a mind so depraved and flinty. The ruffian of Mr. Scott * has a mind of this nature: he has no shame or remorse: but the corrosion of hopeless want, the wasting of unabating disease, and the gloom of unvaried solitude, will have their effect on every nature; and the harder that nature is, and the longer time required to work upon it, so much the more strong and indelible is the impression. This is all the reason I am able to give, why a man of feeling so dull should yet become insane, and why the visions of his distempered brain should be of so horrible a nature.

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* ——— was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed;
One whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires. — MARMION.

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XXIII.

PRISONS.

Pœna autem vehemens ac multò sævior illis,
Quas et Cæditius gravis invenit aut Rhadamanthus,
Nocte dieque suum gestare in pectore testem. — Juv. *Sat.* xiii. (1)

—— Think my former state a happy dream,
From which awaked, the truth of what we are
Shows us but this, — I am sworn brother now
To grim Necessity, and he and I
Will keep a league till death. *Richard II.*

(1) ["Trust me, no tortures which the poets feign,
Can match the fierce, the unutterable pain
He feels, who, night and day, devoid of rest,
Carries his own accuser in his breast." — Gifford.]

That a Letter on Prisons should follow the narratives of such characters as Keene and Grimes is unfortunate, but not to be easily avoided. I confess it is not pleasant to be detained so long by subjects so repulsive to the feelings of many, as the sufferings of mankind; but, though I assuredly would have altered this arrangement, had I been able to have done it by substituting a better, yet am I not of opinion that my verses, or, indeed, the verses of any other person, can so represent the evils and distresses of life as to make any material impression on the mind, and much less any of injurious nature. Alas! sufferings real, evident, continually before us, have not effects very serious or lasting, even in the minds of the more reflecting and compassionate; nor, indeed, does it seem right that the pain caused by sympathy should serve for more than a stimulus to benevolence. If, then, the strength and solidity of truth placed before our eyes have effect so feeble and transitory, I need not be very apprehensive that my representations of Poor-houses and Prisons, of wants and sufferings, however faithfully taken, will excite any feelings which can be seriously lamented. It has always been held as a salutary exercise of the mind, to contemplate the evils and miseries of our nature: I am not therefore without hope, that even this gloomy subject of Imprisonment, and more especially the Dream of the Condemned Highwayman, will excite, in some minds, that mingled pity and abhorrence, which, while it is not unpleasant to the feelings, is useful in its operation. It ties and binds us to all mankind by sensations common to us all, and in some degree connects us, without degradation, even to the most miserable and guilty of our fellow-men.

The Mind of Man accommodates itself to all Situations; Prisons otherwise would be intolerable — Debtors: their different Kinds: three particularly described; others more briefly — An arrested Prisoner: his Account of his Feelings and his Situation — The Alleviations of a Prison — Prisoners for Crimes — Two condemned: a vindictive Female: a Highwayman — The Interval between Condemnation and Execution — His Feelings as the Time approaches — His Dream.

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XXIII.

PRISONS.

'Tis well—that Man to all the varying states
Of good and ill his mind accommodates;
He not alone progressive grief sustains,
But soon submits to unexperienced pains:
Change after change, all climes his body bears;
His mind repeated shocks of changing cares:
Faith and fair Virtue arm the nobler breast;
Hope and mere want of feeling aid the rest.

Or who could bear to lose the balmy air
Of summer's breath, from all things fresh and fair,
With all that man admires or loves below;
All earth and water, wood and vale bestow,
Where rosy pleasures smile, whence real blessings flow;
With sight and sound of every kind that lives,
And crowning all with joy that freedom gives?

Who could from these, in some unhappy day,
Bear to be drawn by ruthless arms away,
To the vile nuisance of a noisome room,
Where only insolence and misery come?
(Save that the curious will by chance appear,
Or some in pity drop a fruitless tear;)
To a damp Prison, where the very sight
Of the warm sun is favour and not right;
Where all we hear or see the feelings shock,
The oath and groan, the fetter and the lock?

Who could bear this and live?—Oh! many a year
All this is borne, and miseries more severe;
And some there are, familiar with the scene,
Who live in mirth, though few become serene.

Far as I might the inward man perceive,
There was a constant effort—not to grieve:
Not to despair, for better days would come,
And the freed debtor smile again at home:
Subdued his habits, he may peace regain,
And bless the woes that were not sent in vain.

Thus might we class the Debtors here confined,
The more deceived, the more deceitful kind;
Here are the guilty race, who mean to live
On credit, that credulity will give;
Who purchase, conscious they can never pay;
Who know their fate, and traffic to betray;
On whom no pity, fear, remorse, prevail,
Their aim a statute, their resource a jail;—

These as the public spoilers we regard,
No dun so harsh, no creditor so hard.

A second kind are they, who truly strive
To keep their sinking credit long alive;
Success, nay prudence, they may want, but yet
They would be solvent, and deplore a debt;
All means they use, to all expedients run,
And are by slow, sad steps, at last undone:
Justly, perhaps, you blame their want of skill,
But mourn their feelings and absolve their will.

There is a Debtor, who his trifling *all*
Spreads in a shop; it would not fill a stall:
There at one window his temptation lays,
And in new modes disposes and displays:
Above the door you shall his name behold,
And what he vends in ample letters told,
The words 'Repository,' 'Warehouse,' all
He uses to enlarge concerns so small:
He to his goods assigns some beauty's name,
Then in her reign, and hopes they'll share her fame,
And talks of credit, commerce, traffic, trade,
As one important by their profit made;
But who can paint the vacancy, the gloom,
And spare dimensions of one backward room?
Wherein he dines, if so 'tis fit to speak
Of one day's herring and the morrow's steak:
An anchorite in diet, all his care
Is to display his stock and vend his ware.

Long waiting hopeless, then he tries to meet
A kinder fortune in a distant street;
There he again displays, increasing yet
Corroding sorrow and consuming debt:
Alas! he wants the requisites to rise—
The true connections, the availing ties;
They who proceed on certainties advance,
These are not times when men prevail by chance:
But still he tries, till, after years of pain,
He finds, with anguish, he has tried in vain.
Debtors are these on whom 'tis hard to press,
'Tis base, impolitic, and merciless.

To these we add a miscellaneous kind,
By pleasure, pride, and indolence confined;
Those whom no calls, no warnings could divert,
The unexperienced and the inexpert;
The builder, idler, schemer, gamester, sot,—
The follies different, but the same their lot;
Victims of horses, lasses, drinking, dice,
Of every passion, humour, whim, and vice.

See! that sad Merchant, who but yesterday
Had a vast household in command and pay;
He now entreats permission to employ
A boy he needs, and then entreats the boy.

And there sits one, improvident but kind,
Bound for a friend, whom honour could not bind;
Sighing, he speaks to any who appear,
"A treach'rous friend—'twas that which sent me here:

" I was too kind,—I thought I could depend
" On his bare word—he was a treach'rous friend."

A Female too!—it is to her a home,
She came before—and she again will come:
Her friends have pity; when their anger drops,
They take her home;—she's tried her schools and shops—
Plan after plan;—but fortune would not mend,
She to herself was still the treach'rous friend;
And wheresoe'er began, all here was sure to end:
And there she sits, as thoughtless and as gay
As if she'd means, or not a debt to pay—
Or knew to-morrow she'd be call'd away—
Or felt a shilling and could dine to-day.

While thus observing, I began to trace
The sober'd features of a well-known face—
Looks once familiar, manners form'd to please,
And all illumined by a heart at ease:
But fraud and flattery ever claim'd a part
(Still unresisted) of that easy heart;
But he at length beholds me—"Ah! my friend!
" And have thy pleasures this unlucky end?

" Too sure," he said, and smiling as he sigh'd;
" I went astray, though Prudence seem'd my guide;
" All she proposed I in my heart approved,
" And she was honour'd, but my pleasure loved—
" Pleasure, the mistress to whose arms I fled,
" From wife-like lectures angry Prudence read.

" Why speak the madness of a life like mine,
" The powers of beauty, novelty, and wine?
" Why paint the wanton smile, the venal vow,
" Or friends whose worth I can appreciate now;
" Oft I perceived my fate, and then could say,
" I'll think to-morrow, I must live to-day:
" So am I here—I own the laws are just—
" And here, where thought is painful, think I must:
" But speech is pleasant; this discourse with thee
" Brings to my mind the sweets of liberty,
" Breaks on the sameness of the place, and gives
" The doubtful heart conviction that it lives.

" Let me describe my anguish in the hour
" When law detain'd me and I felt its power.

" When, in that shipwreck, this I found my shore,
" And join'd the wretched, who were wreck'd before;
" When I perceived each feature in the face,
" Pinch'd through *neglect* or *turbid by disgrace*;
" When in these *wasting forms affliction stood*
" In my afflicted view, *it chill'd my blood*;—
" And forth I rush'd, *a quick retreat to make*,
" Till a loud laugh *proclaim'd the dire mistake*:
" But when the groan had settled to a sigh,
" When gloom became familiar to the eye,
" When I perceive how others seem to rest,
" With every evil rankling in my breast,—
" Led by example, I put on the man,
" Sing off my sighs, and trifle as I can.

"Homer! nay Pope! (for never will I seek
"Applause for learning—nought have I with Greek)
"Gives us the secrets of his pagan hell,
"Where ghost with ghost in sad communion dwell;
"Where shade meets shade, and round the gloomy meads
"They glide, and speak of old heroic deeds,—
"What fields they conquer'd, and what foes they slew,
"And sent to join the melancholy crew.(1)
"When a new spirit in that world was found,
"A thousand shadowy forms came flitting round;
"Those who had known him, fond enquiries made,—
"'Of all we left, inform us, gentle shade,
"'Now as we lead thee in our realms to dwell,
"'Our twilight groves, and meads of asphodel.'(2)

"What paints the poet, is our station here.
"Where we like ghosts and flitting shades appear:
"This is the hell he sings, and here we meet,
"And former deeds to new-made friends repeat;
"Heroic deeds, which here obtain us fame,
"And are in fact the causes why we came:
"Yes! this dim region is old Homer's hell,
"Abate but groves and meads of asphodel.
"Here, when a stranger from your world we spy,
"We gather round him and for news apply;
"He hears unheeding, nor can speech endure,
"But shivering gazes on the vast obscure:
"We smiling pity, and by kindness show
"We felt his feelings and his terrors know;

(1) Odyssey, b. xi.

(2) ["By those happy souls who dwell
In yellow meads of asphodel."—Pope.]

" Then speak of comfort — time will give him sight,
" Where now 'tis dark; where now tis wo — delight.

" ' Have hope,' we say, ' and soon the place to thee
" ' Shall not a prison but a castle be:
" ' When to the wretch whom care and guilt confound,
" ' The world's a prison, with a wider bound;
" ' Go where he may, he feels himself confined,
" ' And wears the fetters of an abject mind.

" But now adieu! those giant-keys appear,
" Thou art not worthy to be inmate here:
" Go to thy world, and to the young declare
" What we, our spirits and employments, are;
" Tell them how we the ills of life endure,
" Our empire stable, and our state secure;
" Our dress, our diet, for their use describe,
" And bid them haste to join the gen'rous tribe:
" Go to thy world, and leave us here to dwell,
" Who to its joys and comforts bid farewell."

Farewell to these; but other scenes I view,
And other griefs, and guilt of deeper hue;
Where Conscience gives to outward ills her pain,
Gloom to the night, and pressure to the chain:
Here separate cells awhile in misery keep
Two doom'd to suffer: there they strive for sleep;
By day indulged, in larger space they range,
Their bondage certain, but their bounds have change.

One was a female, who had grievous ill
Wrought in revenge, and she enjoy'd it still:
With death before her, and her fate in view,
Unsated vengeance in her bosom grew:
Sullen she was and threat'ning; in her eye
Glared the stern triumph that she dared to die:
But first a being in the world must leave—
'Twas once reproach; 'twas now a short reprieve.

She was a pauper bound, who early gave
Her mind to vice and doubly was a slave:
Upbraided, beaten, held by rough control,
Revenge sustain'd, inspired, and fill'd her soul:
She fired a full-stored barn, confess'd the fact,
And laugh'd at law and justified the act:
Our gentle Vicar tried his powers in vain,
She answer'd not, or answer'd with disdain;
Th' approaching fate she heard without a sigh,
And neither cared to live nor fear'd to die.

Not so he felt, who with her was to pay
The forfeit, life—with dread he view'd the day,
And that short space which yet for him remain'd,
Till with his limbs his faculties were chain'd:
He paced his narrow bounds some ease to find,
But found it not,—no comfort reach'd his mind:
Each sense was palsied; when he tasted food,
He sigh'd and said, "Enough—'tis very good."
Since his dread sentence, nothing seem'd to be
As once it was—he seeing could not see,

Nor hearing, hear aright (1);—when first I came
Within his view, I fancied there was shame,
I judged resentment; I mistook the air,—
These fainter passions live not with despair;
Or but exist and die:—Hope, fear, and love,
Joy, doubt, and hate, may other spirits move,
But touch not his, who every waking hour
Has one fix'd dread, and always feels its power.

"But will not Mercy?"—No! she cannot plead
For such an outrage;—'twas a cruel deed:
He stopp'd a timid traveller;—to his breast,
With oaths and curses, was the danger press'd:—
No! he must suffer; pity we may find
For one man's pangs, but must not wrong mankind.

Still I behold him, every thought employ'd
On one dire view!—all others are destroy'd;
This makes his features ghastly, gives the tone
Of his few words resemblance to a groan;

(1) [The tale of the Condemned Felon arose from the following circumstances:—While Mr. Crabbe was struggling with poverty in London, he had some reason to fear that the brother of a very intimate friend, a wild and desperate character, was in Newgate under condemnation for a robbery. Having obtained permission to see the man, who bore the same name, a glance at once relieved his mind from the dread of beholding his friend's brother; but still he never forgot the being he then saw before him. He was pacing the cell, or small yard, with a quick and hurried step: his eye was as glazed and abstracted as that of a corpse:—

"Since his dread sentence, nothing seem'd to be
As once it was—he seeing could not see,
Nor hearing, hear aright. . . .
Each sense was palsied!"

See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 197.]

He takes his tasteless food, and when 'tis done,
Counts up his meals, now lessen'd by that one;
For expectation is on time intent,
Whether he brings us joy or punishment.

Yes! e'en in sleep the impressions all remain,
He hears the sentence and he feels the chain;
He sees the judge and jury, when he shakes,
And loudly cries, "Not guilty," and awakes:
Then chilling tremblings o'er his body creep,
Till worn-out nature is compell'd to sleep.

Now comes the dream again: it shows each scene,
With each small circumstance that comes between—
The call to suffering and the very deed—
There crowds go with him, follow, and precede;
Some heartless shout, some pity, all condemn,
While he in fancied envy looks at them:
He seems the place for that sad act to see,
And dreams the very thirst which then will be:
A priest attends—it seems, the one he knew
In his best days, beneath whose care he grew.

At this his terrors take a sudden flight,
He sees his native village with delight;
The house, the chamber, where he once array'd
His youthful person; where he knelt and pray'd:
Then too the comforts he enjoy'd at home,
The days of joy; the joys themselves are come;—
The hours of innocence;—the timid look
Of his loved maid, when first her hand he took,

And told his hope; her trembling joy appears,
Her forced reserve and his retreating fears.

All now is present;—'tis a moment's gleam
Of former sunshine—stay, delightful dream!
Let him within his pleasant garden walk,
Give him her arm, of blessings let them talk.

Yes! all are with him now, and all the while
Life's early prospects and his Fanny's smile:
Then come his sister and his village-friend,
And he will now the sweetest moments spend
Life has to yield;—No! never will he find
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind:
He goes through shrubby walks these friends among,
Love in their looks and honour on the tongue:
Nay, there's a charm beyond what nature shows,
The bloom is softer and more sweetly glows;—
Pierced by no crime, and urged by no desire
For more than true and honest hearts require,
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed
Through the green lane,—then linger in the mead,—
Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom,—
And pluck the blossom where the wild bees hum;
Then through the broomy bound with ease they pass,
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread,
And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed;
Then 'cross the bounding brook they make their way
O'er its rough bridge—and there behold the bay!—

The ocean smiling to the fervid sun—
The waves that faintly fall and slowly run—
The ships at distance and the boats at hand;
And now they walk upon the sea-side sand,
Counting the number and what kind they be,
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea:
Now arm in arm, now parted, they behold
The glitt'ring waters on the shingles roll'd:
The timid girls, half dreading their design,
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,
And search for crimson weeds, which spreading flow,
Or lie like pictures on the sand below:
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon;
And those live lucid jellies which the eye
Delights to trace as they swim glittering by:
Pearl-shells and rubied star-fish they admire,
And will arrange above the parlour-fire,—
Tokens of bliss![1]—"Oh! horrible! a wave
"Roars as it rises—save me, Edward! save!"
She cries:—Alas! the watchman on his way
Calls, and lets in—truth, terror, and the day!

(1) [We have here a description of the dream of a felon under sentence of death; and though the requisite accuracy and beauty of the landscape-painting are such as must have recommended it to notice in poetry of any order, it derives an unspeakable *charm* from the lowly simplicity and humble content of the characters—at least, we cannot conceive any walk of *ladies and gentlemen* that could furnish out so sweet a picture as terminates this passage.—JEFFREY.]

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XXIV.

SCHOOLS.

Tu quoque ne metuas, quamvis schola verbere multo
Increpet et truculenta senex gerat ora magister;
Degeneres animos timor arguit; at tibi consta
Intrepidus, nec te clamor plagæque sonantes,
Nec matutinis agitet formido sub horis,
Quòd sceptrum vibrat ferulæ, quòd multa supellex
Virgea, quòd molis scuticam prætexit aluta,
Quòd fervent trepido subsellia vestra tumultu,
Pompa doci, et vani fugiatur scena timoris.

AUSONIUS *in Protreptico ad Nepotem.*

Our concluding subject is Education; and some attempt is made to describe its various seminaries, from that of the poor widow who pronounces the alphabet for infants, to seats whence the light of learning is shed abroad on the world. If, in this Letter, I describe the lives of literary men as embittered by much evil; if they be often disappointed, and sometimes unfitted for the world they improve; let it be considered that they are described as men who possess that great pleasure, the exercise of their own talents, and the delight which flows from their own exertions: they have joy in their pursuits, and glory in their acquirements of knowledge. Their victory over difficulties affords the most rational cause of triumph, and the attainment of new ideas leads to incalculable riches, such as gratify the glorious avarice of aspiring and comprehensive minds. Here, then, I place the reward of learning. — Our Universities produce men of the first scholastic attainments, who are heirs to large possessions, or descendants from noble families. Now, to those so favoured, talents and acquirements are, unquestionably, means of arriving at the most elevated and important situations; but these must be the lot of a few: in general, the diligence, acuteness, and perseverance of a youth at the University, have no other reward than some College honours and emoluments, which they desire to exchange, many of them, for very moderate incomes in the obscurity of some distant village: so that, in stating the reward of an ardent and powerful mind to consist principally (I might have said, entirely) in its own views, efforts, and excursions, I place it upon a sure foundation, though not one so elevated as the more ambitious aspire to. It is surely some encouragement to a studious man to reflect that, if he be disappointed, he cannot be without gratification; and that, if he gets but a very humble portion of what the world can give, he has a continual fruition of unwearying enjoyment, of which it has not power to deprive him.

Schools of every Kind to be found in the Borough — The School for Infants — The School Preparatory: the Sagacity of the Mistress in foreseeing Character — Day-Schools of the lower Kind — A Master with Talents adapted to such Pupils: one of superior Qualifications — Boarding-Schools: that for young Ladies: one going first to the Governess, one finally returning Home — School for Youth: Master and Teacher; various Dispositions and Capacities — The Miser-Boy — The Boy-Bully — Sons of Farmers: how amused — What Study will effect, examined — A College Life: one sent from his College to a Benefice; one retained there in Dignity — The Advantages in either Case not considerable — Where, then, the Good of a literary Life? — Answered — Conclusion.

THE BOROUGH.

LETTER XXIV.

SCHOOLS.

To every class we have a School assign'd,
Rules for all ranks and food for every mind:
Yet one there is, that small regard to rule
Or study pays, and still is deem'd a School;
That, where a deaf, poor, patient widow sits,
And awes some thirty infants as she knits;
Infants of humble, busy wives, who pay
Some trifling price for freedom through the day.
At this good matron's hut the children meet,
Who thus becomes the mother of the street:
Her room is small, they cannot widely stray,—
Her threshold high, they cannot run away:
Though deaf, she sees the rebel-heroes shout,—
Though lame, her white rod nimbly walks about;
With band of yarn she keeps offenders in,
And to her gown the sturdiest rogue can pin:

Aided by these, and spells, and tell-tale birds,
Her power they dread and reverence her words.(1)

To Learning's second seats we now proceed,
Where humming students gilded primers read;
Or books with letters large and pictures gay,
To make their reading but a kind of play—
"Reading made Easy," so the titles tell;
But they who read must first begin to spell:
There may be profit in these arts, but still
Learning is labour, call it what you will;
Upon the youthful mind a heavy load,
Nor must we hope to find the royal road.
Some will their easy steps to science show,
And some to heav'n itself their by-way know;
Ah! trust them not,—who fame or bliss would share,
Must learn by labour, and must live by care.

Another matron, of superior kind,
For higher schools prepares the rising mind;
Preparatory she her Learning calls,
The step first made to colleges and halls.

(1) "In every village mark'd with little spire,
Embower'd in trees, and hardly known to Fame;
There dwells in lowly shed and mean attire,
A matron old, whom we Schoolmistress name;
Who boasts unruly brats with birch to tame
They grieven sore, in piteous durance pent,
Awed by the power of this relentless dame;
And oft-times, on vagaries idly bent,
For unkempt hair, or task unconn'd, are sorely shent."

SHENSTONE.

She early sees to what the mind will grow,
Nor abler judge of infant-powers I know;(1)
She sees what soon the lively will impede,
And how the steadier will in turn succeed;
Observes the dawn of wisdom, fancy, taste,
And knows what parts will wear, and what will waste:
She marks the mind too lively, and at once
Sees the gay coxcomb and the rattling dunce.

Long has she lived, and much she loves to trace
Her former pupils, now a lordly race;
Whom when she sees rich robes and furs bedeck,
She marks the pride which once she strove to check.
A Burgess comes, and she remembers well
How hard her task to make his worship spell;
Cold, selfish, dull, inanimate, unkind,
'Twas but by anger he display'd a mind:
Now civil, smiling, complaisant, and gay,
The world has worn th' unsocial crust away:
That sullen spirit now a softness wears,
And, save by fits, e'en dulness disappears:
But still the matron can the man behold,
Dull, selfish, hard, inanimate, and cold.
A Merchant passes,—"Probity and truth,
"Prudence and patience, mark'd thee from thy youth."

(1) "Yet, nursed with skill, what dazzling fruits appear!
E'en now sagacious Foresight points to show
A little bench of heedless bishops here,
And here a chancellor in embryo,
Or bard sublime, if bard may e'er be so."—SHENSTONE.

Thus she observes, but oft retains her fears
For him, who now with name unstain'd appears;
Nor hope relinquishes, for one who yet
Is lost in error and involved in debt;
For latent evil in that heart she found,
More open here, but here the core was sound.

Various our Day-Schools: here behold we one
Empty and still:—the morning duties done,
Soil'd, tatter'd, worn, and thrown in various heaps,
Appear their books, and there confusion sleeps;
The workmen all are from the Babel fled,
And lost their tools, till the return they dread:
Meantime the master, with his wig awry,
Prepares his books for business by-and-by:
Now all th' insignia of the monarch laid
Beside him rest, and none stand by afraid;
He, while his troop light-hearted leap and play,
Is all intent on duties of the day;
No more the tyrant stern or judge severe,
He feels the father's and the husband's fear.

Ah! little think the timid trembling crowd,
That one so wise, so powerful, and so proud,
Should feel himself, and dread the humble ills
Of rent-day charges and of coalman's bills;
That while they mercy from their judge implore,
He fears himself—a knocking at the door;
And feels the burthen as his neighbour states
His humble portion to the parish-rates.

They sit th' allotted hours, then eager run,
Rushing to pleasure when the duty's done;
His hour of leisure is of different kind,
Then cares domestic rush upon his mind,
And half the ease and comfort he enjoys,
Is when surrounded by slates, books, and boys.

Poor *Reuben Dixon* has the noisiest school
Of ragged lads, who ever bow'd to rule;
Low in his price—the men who heave our coals,
And clean our causeways, send him boys in shoals:
To see poor Reuben, with his fry beside,—
Their half-check'd rudeness and his half-scorn'd pride,—
Their room, the sty in which th' assembly meet,
In the close lane behind the Northgate-street;
T' observe his vain attempts to keep the peace,
Till tolls the bell, and strife and troubles cease,—
Calls for our praise; his labour praise deserves,
But not our pity; Reuben has no nerves:
'Mid noise and dirt, and stench, and play, and prate,
He calmly cuts the pen or views the slate.

But *Leonard!*—yes, for Leonard's fate I grieve,
Who loathes the station which he dares not leave;
He cannot dig, he will not beg his bread,
All his dependence rests upon his head;
And deeply skill'd in sciences and arts,
On vulgar lads he wastes superior parts.

Alas! what grief that feeling mind sustains,
In guiding hands and stirring torpid brains;

He whose proud mind from pole to pole will move,
And view the wonders of the worlds above;
Who thinks and reasons strongly:—hard his fate,
Confined for ever to the pen and slate:
True, he submits, and when the long dull day
Has slowly pass'd, in weary tasks, away,
To other worlds with cheerful view he looks,
And parts the night between repose and books.

Amid his labours, he has sometimes tried
To turn a little from his cares aside;
Pope, Milton, Dryden, with delight has seized,
His soul engaged and of his trouble eased:
When, with a heavy eye and ill-done sum,
No part conceived, a stupid boy will come;
Then Leonard first subdues the rising frown,
And bids the blockhead lay his blunders down;
O'er which disgusted he will turn his eye,
To his sad duty his sound mind apply,
And, vex'd in spirit, throw his pleasures by.

Turn we to Schools which more than these afford—
The sound instruction and the wholesome board;
And first our School for Ladies:—pity calls
For one soft sigh, when we behold these walls,
Placed near the town, and where, from window high,
The fair, confined, may our free crowds espy,
With many a stranger gazing up and down,
And all the envied tumult of the town;
May, in the smiling summer-eve, when they
Are sent to sleep the pleasant hours away,

Behold the poor (whom they conceive the bless'd)
Employ'd for hours, and grieved they cannot rest.

Here the fond girl, whose days are sad and few
Since dear mamma pronounced the last adieu,
Looks to the road, and fondly thinks she hears
The carriage-wheels, and struggles with her tears:
All yet is new, the misses great and small,
Madam herself, and teachers, odious all;
From laughter, pity, nay command, she turns,
But melts in softness, or with anger burns;
Nauseates her food, and wonders who can sleep
On such mean beds, where she can only weep:
She scorns condolence—but to all she hates
Slowly at length her mind accommodates;
Then looks on bondage with the same concern
As others felt, and finds that she must learn
As others learn'd—the common lot to share,
To search for comfort and submit to care.

There are, 't is said, who on these seats attend,
And to these ductile minds destruction vend;
Wretches—(to virtue, peace, and nature, foes)—
To these soft minds, their wicked trash expose;
Seize on the soul, ere passions take the sway,
And lead the heart, ere yet it feels, astray:
Smugglers obscene!—and can there be who take
Infernal pains, the sleeping vice to wake?
Can there be those, by whom the thought defiled
Enters the spotless bosom of a child?

By whom the ill is to the heart convey'd,
Who lend the foe, not yet in arms, their aid,
And sap the city-walls before the siege be laid?

Oh! rather skulking in the by-ways steal,
And rob the poorest traveller of his meal;
Burst through the humblest trader's bolted door;
Bear from the widow's hut her winter-store;
With stolen steed, on highways take your stand,
Your lips with curses arm'd, with death your hand;—
Take all but life—the virtuous more would say,
Take life itself, dear as it is, away,
Rather than guilty thus the guileless soul betray.

Years pass away—let us suppose them past,
Th' accomplish'd nymph for freedom looks at last;
All hardships over, which a school contains,
The spirit's bondage and the body's pains;
Where teachers make the heartless, trembling set
Of pupils suffer for their own regret;
Where winter's cold, attack'd by one poor fire,
Chills the fair child, commanded to retire;
She felt it keenly in the morning-air,
Keenly she felt it at the evening prayer.
More pleasant summer; but then walks were made,
Not a sweet ramble, but a slow parade;
They moved by pairs beside the hawthorn-hedge,
Only to set their feelings on an edge;
And now at eve, when all their spirits rise,
Are sent to rest, and all their pleasure dies;
Where yet they all the town alert can see,
And distant plough-boys pacing o'er the lea.

These and the tasks successive masters brought—
The French they conn'd, the curious works they wrought:
The hours they made their taper fingers strike
Note after note, all dull to them alike;
Their drawings, dancings on appointed days,
Playing with globes, and getting parts of plays;
The tender friendships made 'twixt heart and heart,
When the dear friends had nothing to impart:—

All! all! are over;—now th' accomplish'd maid
Longs for the world, of nothing there afraid:
Dreams of delight invade her gentle breast,
And fancied lovers rob the heart of rest;
At the paternal door a carriage stands,
Love knits their hearts and Hymen joins their hands.

Ah!—world unknown! how charming is thy view,
Thy pleasures many, and each pleasure new:
Ah!—world experienced! what of thee is told?
How few thy pleasures, and those few how old!

Within a silent street, and far apart
From noise of business, from a quay or mart,
Stands an old spacious building, and the din
You hear without, explains the work within;
Unlike the whispering of the nymphs, this noise
Loudly proclaims a "Boarding-School for Boys;"
The master heeds it not, for thirty years
Have render'd all familiar to his ears;

He sits in comfort, 'mid the various sound
Of mingled tones for ever flowing round;
Day after day he to his task attends,—
Unvaried toil, and care that never ends:
Boys in their works proceed; while his employ
Admits no change, or changes but the boy;
Yet time has made it easy;—he beside
Has power supreme, and power is sweet to pride:
But grant him pleasure;—what can teachers feel,
Dependent helpers always at the wheel?
Their power despised, their compensation small,
Their labour dull, their life laborious all;
Set after set the lower lads to make
Fit for the class which their superiors take;
The road of learning for a time to track
In roughest state, and then again go back:
Just the same way on other troops to wait,—
Attendants fix'd at learning's lower gate.

The Day-tasks now are over,—to their ground
Rush the gay crowd with joy-compelling sound;
Glad to illude the burthens of the day,
The eager parties hurry to their play: (1)

(1) "Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,—
We love the play-place of our early days;
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
That feels not at that sight—and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graving skill;
The very name we carved subsisting still;
The bench on which we sat while deep employ'd,
Though mangled, hack'd, and hew'd, yet not destroy'd.
The little ones unbutton'd, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot;
As happy as we once to kneel and draw
The chalky ring and knuckle down at taw.

Then in these hours of liberty we find,
The native bias of the opening mind;
They yet possess not skill the mask to place,
And hide the passions glowing in the face;
Yet some are found—the close, the sly, the mean,
Who know already all must not be seen.

Lo! one who walks apart, although so young,
He lays restraint upon his eye and tongue; (1)
Nor will he into scrapes or dangers get,
And half the school are in the stripling's debt:
Suspicious, timid, he is much afraid
Of trick and plot:—he dreads to be betray'd:
He shuns all friendship, for he finds they lend,
When lads begin to call each other friend:
Yet self with self has war; the tempting sight
Of fruit on sale provokes his appetite;—
See! how he walks the sweet seduction by;
That he is tempted, costs him first a sigh,—
'T is dangerous to indulge, 't is grievous to deny!
This he will choose, and whispering asks the price,
The purchase dreadful, but the portion nice;

This fond attachment to the well-known place,
When first we started into life's long race,
Maintains its hold with such unfailing sway,
We feel it e'en in age and at our latest day."—COWPER.

(1) [In this description Mr. Crabbe, condescended to borrow, though probably with some alterations and improvements, the ideas and the language of his second son; whose 'School Eclogues,' written in boyhood, much struck and gratified his father. Mr. John Crabbe has since written many imitations of his father's poetry, some of which, it is hoped, may yet be published.]

Within the pocket he explores the pence;
Without, temptation strikes on either sense,
The sight, the smell;—but then he thinks again
O money gone! while fruit nor taste remain.
Meantime there comes an eager thoughtless boy,
Who gives the price and only feels the joy:
Example dire! the youthful miser stops,
And slowly back the treasured coinage drops:
Heroic deed! for should he now comply,
Can he to-morrow's appetite deny?
Beside, these spendthrifts who so freely live,
Cloy'd with their purchase, will a portion give:—
Here ends debate, he buttons up his store,
And feels the comfort that it burns no more.

Unlike to him the Tyrant-boy (1), whose sway
All hearts acknowledge; him the crowds obey:
At his command they break through every rule;
Whoever governs, he controls the school:
'T is not the distant emperor moves their fear,
But the proud viceroy who is ever near.

Verres could do that mischief in a day,
For which not Rome, in all its power, could pay;
And these boy-tyrants will their slaves distress,
And do the wrongs no master can redress:
The mind they load with fear: it feels disdain
For its own baseness; yet it tries in vain

(1) [This schoolboy despot was drawn, Mr. Crabbe said, from a tyrant who was his own terror in the school at Stowmarket.]

To shake th' admitted power;—the coward comes again:
'T is more than present pain these tyrants give,
Long as we 've life some strong impressions live;
And these young ruffians in the soul will sow
Seeds of all vices that on weakness grow.

Hark! at his word the trembling younglings flee,
Where he is walking none must walk but he;
See! from the winter-fire the weak retreat,
His the warm corner, his the favourite seat,
Save when he yields it to some slave to keep
Awhile, then back, at his return, to creep:
At his command his poor dependants fly,
And humbly bribe him as a proud ally;
Flatter'd by all, the notice he bestows,
Is gross abuse, and bantering and blows;
Yet he 's a dunce, and, spite of all his fame
Without the desk, within he feels his shame:
For there the weaker boy, who felt his scorn,
For him corrects the blunders of the morn;
And he is taught, unpleasant truth! to find
The trembling body has the prouder mind.

Hark! to that shout, that burst of empty noise,
From a rude set of bluff, obstreperous boys;
They who, like colts let loose, with vigour bound,
And thoughtless spirit, o'er the beaten ground;
Fearless they leap, and every youngster feels
His Alma active in his hands and heels.

These are the sons of farmers, and they come
With partial fondness for the joys of home;
Their minds are coursing in their fathers' fields,
And e'en the dream a lively pleasure yields;
They, much enduring, sit th' allotted hours,
And o'er a grammar waste their sprightly powers;
They dance; but them can measured steps delight,
Whom horse and hounds to daring deeds excite?
Nor could they bear to wait from meal to meal,
Did they not slyly to the chamber steal,
And there the produce of the basket seize,
The mother's gift! still studious of their ease.
Poor Alma, thus oppress'd, forbears to rise,
But rests or revels in the arms and thighs. (1)

"But is it sure that study will repay
"The more attentive and forbearing?"—Nay!
The farm, the ship, the humble shop have each
Gains which severest studies seldom reach.

(1) Should any of my readers find themselves at a loss in this place, I beg leave to refer them to a poem of Prior, called Alma, or The Progress of the Mind:—

"My simple system shall suppose
That Alma enters at the toes;
That then she mounts, by just degrees,
Up to the ancles, legs, and knees;
Next, as the sap of life does rise,
She lends her vigour to the thighs;
And, all these under-regions past,
She nestles somewhere near the waist;
Gives pain or pleasure, grief or laughter,
As we shall show at length hereafter.
Mature, if not improved by time,
Up to the heart she loves to climb;
From thence, compell'd by craft and age,
She makes the head her latest stage."

At College place a youth, who means to raise
His state by merit and his name by praise;
Still much he hazards; there is serious strife
In the contentions of a scholar's life:
Not all the mind's attention, care, distress,
Nor diligence itself, ensure success:
His jealous heart a rival's powers may dread,
Till its strong feelings have confused his head,
And, after days and months, nay, years of pain,
He finds just lost the object he would gain.

But grant him this and all such life can give,
For other prospects he begins to live;
Begins to feel that man was form'd to look
And long for other objects than a book:
In his mind's eye his house and glebe he sees,
And farms and talks with farmers at his ease;
And time is lost, till fortune sends him forth
To a rude world unconscious of his worth;
There in some petty parish to reside,
The college-boast, then turn'd the village guide:
And though awhile his flock and dairy please,
He soon reverts to former joys and ease,
Glad when a friend shall come to break his rest,
And speak of all the pleasures they possess'd,
Of masters, fellows, tutors, all with whom
They shared those pleasures, never more to come;(1)

(1) [—"if chance some well-remember'd face,
Some old companion of my early race,
Advanced to claim his friend, with honest joy,
My eyes, my heart, proclaim'd me still a boy;
The glittering scene, the fluttering groups around,
Were quite forgotten when my friend was found;

Till both conceive the times by bliss endear'd,
Which once so dismal and so dull appear'd.

But fix our Scholar, and suppose him crown'd
With all the glory gain'd on classic ground;
Suppose the world without a sigh resign'd,
And to his college all his care confined;
Give him all honours that such states allow,
The freshman's terror and the tradesman's bow;
Let his apartments with his taste agree,
And all his views be those he loves to see;
Let him each day behold the savoury treat,
For which he pays not, but is paid to eat;
These joys and glories soon delight no more,
Although, withheld, the mind is vex'd and sore;
The honour too is to the place confined,
Abroad they know not each superior mind:
Strangers no *wranglers* in these figures see,
Nor give they worship to a high degree;
Unlike the prophet's is the scholar's case,
His honour all is in his dwelling-place:
And there such honours are familiar things;
What is a monarch in a crowd of kings?
Like other sovereigns he's by forms address'd,
By statutes govern'd and with rules oppress'd.

The smiles of beauty, though those smiles were dear,
Could hardly charm me when that friend was near;
My thoughts bewilder'd in the fond surprise,
The woods of Ida danced before my eyes;
I saw the sprightly wanderers pour along,
I saw and join'd again the joyous throng,
Panting, again I traced the lofty grove,
And Friendship's feelings triumph'd over Love."

BYRON. *Childish Recollections.*]

When all these forms and duties die away,
And the day passes like the former day,
Then of exterior things at once bereft,
He's to himself and one attendant left;
Nay, John too goes(1); nor aught of service more
Remains for him; he gladly quits the door,
And, as he whistles to the college-gate,
He kindly pities his poor master's fate.

Books cannot always please, however good;
Minds are not ever craving for their food;
But sleep will soon the weary soul prepare
For cares to-morrow that were this day's care:
For forms, for feasts, that sundry times have past,
And formal feasts that will for ever last.

"But then from Study will no comforts rise?"
Yes! such as studious minds alone can prize;
Comforts, yea!—joys ineffable they find,
Who seek the prouder pleasures of the mind:
The soul, collected in those happy hours,
Then makes her efforts, then enjoys her powers;
And in those seasons feels herself repaid,
For labours past and honours long delay'd.

No! 'tis not worldly gain, although by chance
The sons of learning may to wealth advance;
Nor station high, though in some favouring hour
The sons of learning may arrive at power;

(1) [The sensation of loneliness felt by a fellow of a college, when his servant left him for the night, was very feelingly described to Mr. Crabbe by the late Mr. Lambert, one of the senior fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, and made a strong impression on the poet's mind.]

Nor is it glory, though the public voice
Of honest praise will make the heart rejoice:
But 'tis the mind's own feelings give the joy,
Pleasures she gathers in her own employ—
Pleasures that gain or praise cannot bestow,
Yet can dilate and raise them when they flow.

For this the Poet looks the world around,
Where form and life and reasoning man are found:
He loves the mind, in all its modes, to trace,
And all the manners of the changing race;
Silent he walks the road of life along,
And views the aims of its tumultuous throng:
He finds what shapes the Proteus-passions take,
And what strange waste of life and joy they make,
And loves to show them in their varied ways,
With honest blame or with unflattering praise:
'Tis good to know, 'tis pleasant to impart,
These turns and movements of the human heart:
The stronger features of the soul to paint,
And make distinct the latent and the faint;
MAN AS HE IS, to place in all men's view,
Yet none with rancour, none with scorn pursue:
Nor be it ever of my Portraits told—
"Here the strong lines of malice we behold."

THIS let me hope, that when in public view
I bring my Pictures, men may feel them true;

" This is a Likeness," may they all declare,
" And I have seen him, but I know not where:"
For I should mourn the mischief I had done,
If as the likeness all would fix on one.

Man's Vice and Crime I combat as I can,
But to his GOD and conscience leave the Man;
I search (a Quixote!) all the land about,
To find its Giants and Enchanters out,—
(The Giant-Folly, the Enchanter-Vice,
Whom doubtless I shall vanquish in a trice;)—
But is there man whom I would injure?—No!
I am to him a fellow, not a foe,—
A fellow-sinner, who must rather dread
The bolt, than hurl it at another's head.

No! let the guiltless, if there such be found,
Launch forth the spear, and deal the deadly wound;
How can I so the cause of Virtue aid,
Who am myself attainted and afraid?
Yet as I can, I point the powers of rhyme,
And, sparing criminals, attack the crime.(1)

(1) [" *The Borough* contains a description, in twenty-four letters, of a sea-port. A glance at the contents is sufficient to prove that the author is far from having abjured the system of delineating in verse subjects little grateful to poetry. No themes surely can be more untunable than those to which he has here attempered his lyre. It is observable, too, that they are sought in a class of society yet lower than that which he has hitherto represented. The impurities of a rural hamlet were sufficiently repulsive;—what then must be those of a maritime borough? This gradual sinking in the scale of realities seems to us a direct consequence of that principle of Mr. Crabbe, on which we have hazarded some strictures. The 'Borough' is purely the creature of that principle; the legitimate successor of the 'Village' and the 'Parish Register.' Indeed, if the checks of fancy and taste be removed from poetry, and admission be granted to images, or

whatever description, provided they have the passport of reality, it is not easy to tell at what point the line of exclusion should be drawn, or why it should be drawn at all. No image of depravity, so long as it answers to some archetype in nature or art, can be refused the benefit of the general rule. — It was the misfortune of Mr. Crabbe's former poems, that they were restricted to a narrow range. They treated of a particular class of men and manners, and therefore precluded those representations of general nature, which, it scarcely needs the authority of Johnson to convince us, are the only things that 'can please many and please long.' But, with respect to the present poem, this circumstance prevails to a much greater degree. In the inhabitants of a sea-port there are obviously but few generic traces of nature to be detected. The mixed character of their pursuits, and their amphibious sort of life, throw their manners and customs into a striking cast of singularity, and make them almost a separate variety of the human race. Among the existing modifications of society, it may be questioned if there be one which is more distinctly specified, we might say individualised." — GIFFORD. — The reader will find Mr. Crabbe's own answer to the foregoing criticism, in the preface to the *Tales*, in a subsequent page of this volume.]

OCCASIONAL PIECES.

[NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.]

THE LADIES OF THE LAKE.

WRITTEN ON VISITING NORMANSTON IN THE YEAR 1785.

[" Normanston, a sweet little villa near Beccles, was one of the early resorts of Mr. Crabbe and Miss Elmy, in the days of their anxious affection. Here four or five spinsters of independent fortune had formed a sort of Protestant nunnery, the abbess being Miss Blacknell, who afterwards deserted it to become the wife of the late Admiral Sir Thomas Graves, a lady of distinguished elegance in her tastes and manners. Another of the sisterhood was Miss Waldron, late of Tamworth, — dear, good-humoured, hearty, masculine Miss Waldron, who could sing a jovial song like a fox-hunter, and, like him, I had almost said, toss a glass; and yet there was such an air of high *ton*, and such intellect mingled with these manners, that the perfect lady was not veiled for a moment." — *Life of Crabbe, antè*, Vol. I. p. 147. A lady of rank, in Norfolk, has lately written as follows to the Poet's biographer: — " The enjoyment of your Memoir was much increased by my knowledge of several of the parties mentioned in it. Miss Blacknell and Miss Waldron were the acquaintance of my early youth: a visit to Normanston was always a joyful event; and, notwithstanding the masculine deportment of Miss Waldron, her excellent sense and good nature caused her to be preferred, by many judges of character, to her more dignified and graceful companion. I have in my possession a copy of very appropriate verses, which Mr. Crabbe addressed to Miss B. and Miss W. in the year 1785." . . . . .]

SHALL I, who oft have woo'd the Muse
For gentle Ladies' sake,
So fair a theme as this refuse—
The Ladies of the Lake?

Hail, happy pair! 'tis yours to share
Life's elegance and ease;
The bliss of wealth without the care,
The will and power to please;—

To please, but not alone our eyes,
Nor yet alone our mind;
Your taste, your goodness, charm the wise—
Your manners all mankind.

The pleasant scenes that round you glow,
Like caskets fraught with gold,
Though beauteous in themselves, yet owe
Their worth to what they hold.

Trees may be found, and lakes, as fair;
Fresh lawns, and gardens green;
But where again the Sister-pair
Who animate the scene?

Where sense of that superior kind,
Without man's haughty air?
And where, without the trifling mind,
The softness of the fair?

Folly, with wealth, may idly raise
Her hopes to shine like you,
And humble flattery sound her praise,
Till she believes it true;

But wealth no more can give that grace
To souls of meaner kind,
Than summer's fiery sun can chase
Their darkness from the blind.

But drop, you 'll say, the useless pen:
Reluctant—I obey,
Yet let me take it once again,
If not to praise, to pray

That you, with partial grace, may deign
This poor attempt to take,
And I may oft behold again
The Ladies of the Lake.

INFANCY — A FRAGMENT.

[Mr. Crabbe's father possessed a small sailing-boat, in which he delighted to navigate the river. The first event which was deeply impressed on the Poet's memory was a voyage in this vessel. A party of amateur sailors was formed — the yacht club of Aldborough — to try the new purchase; a jovial dinner prepared at Orford, and a merry return anticipated at night; and his fond mother obtained permission for George to be one of the company. Soon after sunrise, in a fine summer morning, they were seated in their respective vessels, and started in gallant trim, tacking and manœuvring on the bosom of the flickering water, as it winds gently towards its junction with the sea. The freshness of the early dawn, the anticipation of amusements at an unknown place, and no little exultation in his father's *crack* vessel, "made it," he said, "a morning of exquisite delight." Among his MSS. are the following verses on this early incident. — *Life, antè*, Vol. I. p. 14.]

Who on the new-born light can back return,
And the first efforts of the soul discern —
Waked by some sweet maternal smile, no more
To sleep so long or fondly as before?

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No! Memory cannot reach, with all her power,
To that new birth, that life-awakening hour.
No! all the traces of her first employ
Are keen perceptions of the senses' joy,
And their distaste — what then could they impart? —
That figs were luscious, and that rods had smart.

But, though the Memory in that dubious way
Recalls the dawn and twilight of her day,
And thus encounters, in the doubtful view,
With imperfection and distortion too;
Can she not tell us, as she looks around,
Of good and evil, which the most abound?

Alas! and what is earthly good? 't is lent
Evil to hide, to soften, to prevent,
By scenes and shows that cheat the wandering eye,
While the more pompous misery passes by;
Shifts and amusements that awhile succeed,
And heads are turn'd, that bosoms may not bleed:
For what is Pleasure, that we toil to gain?
'T is but the slow or rapid flight of Pain.
Set Pleasure by, and there would yet remain,
For every nerve and sense the sting of Pain:
Set Pain aside, and fear no more the sting,
And whence your hopes and pleasures can ye bring?
No! there is not a joy beneath the skies,
That from no grief nor trouble shall arise.

Why does the Lover with such rapture fly
To his dear mistress? — He shall show us why: —

Because her absence is such cause of grief
That her sweet smile alone can yield relief.
Why, then, that smile is Pleasure:—True, yet still
'T is but the absence of the former ill:
For, married, soon at will he comes and goes;
Then pleasures die, and pains become repose,
And he has none of these, and therefore none of those.

Yes! looking back as early as I can,
I see the griefs that seize their subject Man,
That in the weeping Child their early reign began:
Yes! though Pain softens, and is absent since,
He still controls me like my lawful prince.
Joys I remember, like phosphoric light
Or squibs and crackers on a gala night.
Joys are like oil; if thrown upon the tide
Of flowing life, they mix not, nor subside:
Griefs are like waters on the river thrown,
They mix entirely, and become its own.
Of all the good that grew of early date,
I can but parts and incidents relate:
A guest arriving, or a borrow'd day
From school, or schoolboy triumph at some play:
And these from Pain may be deduced; for these
Removed some ill, and hence their power to please.

But it was Misery stung me in the day
Death of an infant sister made a prey;
For then first met and moved my early fears,
A father's terrors, and a mother's tears.
Though greater anguish I have since endured,—
Some heal'd in part, some never to be cured;

Yet was there something in that first-born ill,
So new, so strange, that memory feels it still!

That my first grief: but, oh! in after-years
Were other deaths, that call'd for other tears.
No! that I cannot, that I dare not, paint—
That patient sufferer, that enduring saint,
Holy and lovely—but all words are faint. (1)
But here I dwell not—let me, while I can,
Go to the Child, and lose the suffering Man.

Sweet was the morning's breath, the inland tide,
And our boat gliding, where alone could glide
Small craft—and they oft touch'd on either side.
It was my first-born joy. I heard them say,
"Let the child go; he will enjoy the day."
For children ever feel delighted when
They take their portion, and enjoy with men.
Give him the pastime that the old partake,
And he will quickly top and taw forsake.

The linnet chirp'd upon the furze as well,
To my young sense, as sings the nightingale.
Without was paradise — because within
Was a keen relish, without taint of sin.

A town appear'd,—and where an infant went,
Could they determine, on themselves intent?

(1) [Mr. Crabbe's early religious impressions were strongly influenced by those of his mother; who was a deeply devout woman. Her mildness, humility, patient endurance of afflictions and sufferings, meek habits, and devout spirit, strongly recommended her example to her son. — *Life, antè*, Vol. I. p. 106.]

I lost my way, and my companions me,
And all, their comforts and tranquillity.
Mid-day it was, and, as the sun declined,
The good, found early, I no more could find:
The men drank much, to whet the appetite;
And, growing heavy, drank to make them light;
Then drank to relish joy, then further to excite.
Their cheerfulness did but a moment last;
Something fell short, or something overpast.
The lads play'd idly with the helm and oar,
And nervous women would be set on shore,
Till "civil dudgeon" grew, and peace would smile no more.

Now on the colder water faintly shone
The sloping light — the cheerful day was gone;
Frown'd every cloud, and from the gather'd frown
The thunder burst, and rain came pattering down.
My torpid senses now my fears obey'd,
When the fierce lightning on the eye-balls play'd.
Now, all the freshness of the morning fled,
My spirits burden'd, and my heart was dead;
The female servants show'd a child their fear,
And men, full wearied, wanted strength to cheer;
And when, at length, the dreaded storm went past,
And there was peace and quietness at last,
'T was not the morning's quiet — it was not
Pleasure revived, but Misery forgot:
It was not Joy that now commenced her reign,
But mere relief from wretchedness and Pain.

So many a day, in life's advance, I knew;
So they commenced, and so they ended too.
All Promise they — all Joy as they began!
But Joy grew less, and vanish'd as they ran!
Errors and evils came in many a form, —
The mind's delusion, and the passions' storm.

The promised joy, that like this morning rose,
Broke on my view, then clouded at its close;
E'en Love himself, that promiser of bliss,
Made his best days of pleasure end like this:
He mix'd his bitters in the cup of joy
Nor gave a bliss uninjured by alloy.

THE MAGNET.

WHY force the backward heart on love,
That of itself the flame might feel?
When you the Magnet's power would prove,
Say, would you strike it on the Steel?

From common flints you may by force
Excite some transient sparks of fire;
And so, in natures rude and coarse,
Compulsion may provoke desire.

But when, approaching by degrees,
The Magnet to the Steel draws nigh,
At once they feel, each other seize,
And rest in mutual sympathy.

So must the Lover find his way
To move the heart he hopes to win —
Must not in distant forms delay —
Must not in rude assaults begin.

For such attractive power has Love,
We justly each extreme may fear:
'T is lost when we too distant prove,
And when we rashly press too near.

STORM AND CALM.

[FROM THE ALBUM OF THE DUCHESS OF RUTLAND.]

At sea when threatening tempests rise,
When angry winds the waves deform,
The seaman lifts to Heaven his eyes,
And deprecates the dreaded storm.
" Ye furious powers, no more contend;
" Ye winds and seas, your conflict end;
" And on the mild subsiding deep,
" Let Fear repose and Terror sleep!"

At length the waves are hush'd in peace,
O'er flying clouds the sun prevails;
The weary winds their efforts cease,
And fill no more the flagging sails;
Fix'd to the deep the vessel rides
Obedient to the changing tides;

No helm she feels, no course she keeps,
But on the liquid marble sleeps.

Sick of a Calm the sailor lies,
And views the still, reflecting seas;
Or, whistling to the burning skies,
He hopes to wake the slumbering breeze:
The silent noon, the solemn night,
The same dull round of thoughts excite,
Till, tired of the revolving train,
He wishes for the Storm again.

Thus, when I felt the force of Love,
When all the passion fill'd my breast, —
When, trembling, with the storm I strove,
And pray'd, but vainly pray'd, for rest;
'T was tempest all, a dreadful strife
For ease, for joy, for more than life:
'T was every hour to groan and sigh
In grief, in fear, in jealousy.

I suffer'd much, but found at length
Composure in my wounded heart;
The mind attain'd its former strength,
And bade the lingering hopes depart;
Then Beauty smiled, and I was gay,
I view'd her as the cheerful day;
And if she frown'd, the clouded sky
Had greater terrors for mine eye.

I slept, I waked, and, morn and eve,
The noon, the night appear'd the same;

No thought arose the soul to grieve,
To me no thought of pleasure came;
Doom'd the dull comforts to receive
Of wearied passions still and tame.—
" Alas!" I cried, when years had flown—
" Must no awakening joy be known?
" Must never Hope's inspiring breeze
" Sweep off this dull and torpid ease—
" Must never Love's all-cheering ray
" Upon the frozen fancy play—
" Unless they seize the passive soul,
" And with resistless power control?
" Then let me all their force sustain,
" And bring me back the Storm again."

SATIRE.

I LOVE not the satiric Muse:
No man on earth would I abuse;
Nor with empoison'd verses grieve
The most offending son of Eve.
Leave him to law, if he have done
What injures any other son:
It hardens man to see his name
Exposed to public mirth or shame;
And rouses, as it spoils his rest,
The baser passions of his breast.

Attack a book — attack a song —
You will not do essential wrong ;
You may their blemishes expose,
And yet not be the writer's foes.
But when the man you thus attack,
And him expose with critic art,
You put a creature to the rack —
You wring, you agonise, his heart.
No farther honest Satire can
In all her enmity proceed,
Than passing by the wicked Man,
To execrate the wicked Deed.

If so much virtue yet remain
That he would feel the sting and pain,
That virtue is a reason why
The Muse her sting should not apply:
If no such Virtue yet survive,
What is your angry Satire worth,
But to arouse the sleeping hive,
And send the raging Passions forth,
In bold, vindictive, angry flight,
To sting wherever they alight?

BELVOIR CASTLE.

[WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE DUCHESS DOWAGER OF RUTLAND, AND INSCRIBED IN HER ALBUM, 1812.]

WHEN native Britons British lands possess'd,
Their glory freedom — and their blessing rest —
A powerful chief this lofty Seat survey'd,
And here his mansion's strong foundation laid:
In his own ground the massy stone he sought,
From his own woods the rugged timbers brought;
Rudeness and greatness in his work combined,—
An humble taste with an aspiring mind.
His herds the vale, his flocks the hills, o'erspread;
Warriors and vassals at his table fed;
Sons, kindred, servants, waited on his will,
And hail'd his mansion on the mighty hill.

In a new age a Saxon Lord appear'd,
And on the lofty base his dwelling rear'd:
Then first the grand but threatening form was known,
And to the subject-vale a Castle shown,
Where strength alone appear'd,—the gloomy wall
Enclosed the dark recess, the frowning hall;
In chilling rooms the sullen fagot gleam'd;
On the rude board the common banquet steam'd;
Astonish'd peasants fear'd the dreadful skill
That placed such wonders on their favourite hill:
The soldier praised it as he march'd around,
And the dark building o'er the valley frown'd.

A Norman Baron, in succeeding times,
Here, while the minstrel sang heroic rhymes,
In feudal pomp appear'd. It was his praise
A loftier dome with happier skill to raise;
His halls, still gloomy, yet with grandeur rose;
Here friends were feasted,—here confined were foes.
In distant chambers, with her female train,
Dwelt the fair partner of his awful reign:
Curb'd by no laws, his vassal-tribe he sway'd,—
The Lord commanded, and the slave obey'd:
No soft'ning arts in those fierce times were found,
But rival Barons spread their terrors round;
Each, in the fortress of his power, secure,
Of foes was fearless, and of soldiers sure;
And here the chieftain, for his prowess praised,
Long held the Castle that his might had raised.

Came gentler times:—the Barons ceased to strive
With kingly power, yet felt their pomp survive;
Impell'd by softening arts, by honour charm'd,
Fair ladies studied and brave heroes arm'd.
The Lord of Belvoir then his Castle view'd,
Strong without form, and dignified but rude;
The dark long passage, and the chambers small,
Recess and secret hold, he banish'd all,
Took the rude gloom and terror from the place,
And bade it shine with majesty and grace.

Then arras first o'er rugged walls appear'd,
Bright lamps at eve the vast apartment cheer'd;

In each superior room were polish'd floors,
Tall ponderous beds, and vast cathedral doors:
All was improved within, and then below
Fruits of the hardier climes were taught to grow;
The silver flagon on the table stood,
And to the vassal left the horn and wood.
Dress'd in his liveries, of his honours vain,
Came at the Baron's call a menial train;
Proud of their arms, his strength and their delight;
Loud in the feast, and fearless in the fight.

Then every eye the stately fabric drew
To every part; for all were fair to view:
The powerful chief the far-famed work descried,
And heard the public voice that waked his pride.
Pleased he began—"About, above, below,
"What more can wealth command, or science show?
"Here taste and grandeur join with massy strength;
"Slow comes perfection, but it comes at length.
"Still must I grieve: these halls and towers sublime,
"Like vulgar domes, must feel the force of time;
"And, when decay'd, can future days repair
"What I in these have made so strong and fair?
"My future heirs shall want of power deplore,
"When Time destroys what Time can not restore."

Sad in his glory, serious in his pride,
At once the chief exulted and he sigh'd;
Dreaming he sigh'd, and still, in sleep profound,
His thoughts were fix'd within the favourite bound;
When lo! another Castle rose in view,
That in an instant all his pride o'erthrew.

In that he saw what massy strength bestows,
And what from grace and lighter beauty flows,
Yet all harmonious; what was light and free,
Robb'd not the weightier parts of dignity —
Nor what was ponderous hid the work of grace,
But all were just, and all in proper place:
Terrace on terrace rose, and there was seen
Adorn'd with flowery knolls the sloping green,
Bounded by balmy shrubs from climes unknown,
And all the nobler trees that grace our own.

Above, he saw a giant-tower ascend,
That seem'd the neighbouring beauty to defend
Of some light graceful dome, — "And this," he cried,
"Awakes my pleasure, though it wounds my pride."
He saw apartments where appear'd to rise
What seem'd as men, and fix'd on him their eyes,—
Pictures that spoke; and there were mirrors tall,
Doubling each wonder by reflecting all.
He saw the genial board, the massy plate,
Grace unaffected, unencumber'd state;
And something reach'd him of the social arts,
That soften manners, and that conquer hearts.

Wrapt in amazement, as he gazed he saw
A form of heav'nly kind, and bow'd in awe:
The spirit view'd him with benignant grace,
And styled himself the Genius of the Place.
"Gaze, and be glad!" he cried, "for this, indeed,
"Is the fair Seat that shall to thine succeed,

" When these famed kingdoms shall as sisters be,
" And one great sovereign rule the powerful three:
" Then yon rich Vale, far stretching to the west,
" Beyond thy bound, shall be by *one* possess'd:
" Then shall true grace and dignity accord —
" With splendour, ease — the Castle with its Lord."

The Baron waked, — " It was," he cried, " a view
" Lively as truth, and I will think it true:
" Some gentle spirit to my mind has brought
" Forms of fair works to be hereafter wrought;
" But yet of mine a part will then remain,
" Nor will that Lord its humbler worth disdain;
" Mix'd with his mightier pile shall mine be found,
" By him protected, and with his renown'd;
" He who its full destruction could command,
" A part shall save from the destroying hand,
" And say, 'It long has stood, — still honour'd let it stand.' "

THE WORLD OF DREAMS.

I.

And is thy soul so wrapt in sleep?
  Thy senses, thy affections, fled?
No play of fancy thine, to keep
  Oblivion from that grave, thy bed?
Then art thou but the breathing dead:
  I envy, but I pity too:
The bravest may *my* terrors dread,
  The happiest fain *my* joys pursue.

II.

Soon as the real World I lose,
  Quick Fancy takes her wonted way,
Or Baxter's sprites my soul abuse—
  For how it is I cannot say,
Nor to what powers a passive prey,
  I feel such bliss, I fear such pain;
But all is gloom, or all is gay,
  Soon as th' ideal World I gain.

III.

Come, then, I woo thee, sacred Sleep!
Vain troubles of the world, farewell!
Spirits of Ill! your distance keep —
And in your own dominions dwell,
Ye, the sad emigrants from hell!
Watch, dear seraphic beings, round,
And these black Enemies repel;
Safe be my soul, my slumbers sound!

IV.

In vain I pray! It is my sin
That thus admits the shadowy throng.
Oh! now they break tumultuous in —
Angels of darkness fierce and strong.
Oh! I am borne of fate along;
My soul, subdued, admits the foe,
Perceives and yet endures the wrong,
Resists, and yet prepares to go.

V.

Where am I now? and what to meet?
Where I have been entrapt before:
The wicked city's vilest street, —
I know what I must now explore.
The dark-brow'd throng more near and more,
With murderous looks are on me thrust,
And lo! they ope the accursed door,
And I must go—I know I must!

VI.

That female fiend! — Why is she there?
Alas! I know her. — Oh, begone!
Why is that tainted bosom bare,
Why fix'd on me that eye of stone?
Why have they left us thus alone?
I saw the deed — why then appear?
Thou art not form'd of blood and bone!
Come not, dread being, come not near!

VII.

So! all is quiet, calm, serene;
I walk a noble mansion round —
From room to room, from scene to scene,
I breathless pass, in gloom profound:
No human shape, no mortal sound —
I feel an awe, I own a dread,
And still proceed! — nor stop nor bound —
And all is silent, all is dead.

VIII.

Now I'm hurried, borne along,
All is business! all alive!
Heavens! how mighty is the throng,
Voices humming like a hive!
Through the swelling crowd I strive,
Bustling forth my way to trace:
Never fated to arrive
At the still-expected place.

IX.

Ah me! how sweet the morning sun
  Deigns on yon sleepy town to shine!
How soft those far-off rivers run —
  Those trees their leafy heads decline!
Balm-breathing zephyrs, all divine,
  Their health-imparting influence give:
Now, all that earth allows is mine —
  Now, now I dream not, but I live.

X.

My friend, my brother, lost in youth,
  I meet in doubtful, glad surprise,
In conscious love, in fearless truth:
  What pleasures in the meeting rise!
Ah! brief enjoyment!—Pleasure dies
  E'en in its birth, and turns to pain:
He meets me with hard glazed eyes!
  He quits me — spurns me — with disdain.

XI.

I sail the sea, I walk the land;
  In all the world am I alone:
Silent I pace the sea-worn sand,
  Silent I view the princely throne;
I listen heartless for the tone
  Of winds and waters, but in vain;
Creation dies without a groan!
  And I without a hope remain!

XII.

Unnumber'd riches I behold,
  Glories untasted I survey:
My heart is sick, my bosom cold,
  Friends! neighbours! kindred! where are they?
In the sad, last, long, endless day!
  When I can neither pray nor weep,
Doom'd o'er the sleeping world to stray,
  And not to die, and not to sleep.

XIII.

Beside the summer sea I stand;
  Where the slow billows swelling shine:
How beautiful this pearly sand,
  That waves, and winds, and years refine:
Be this delicious quiet mine!
  The joy of youth! so sweet before,
When I could thus my frame recline,
  And watch th' entangled weeds ashore.

XIV.

Yet, I remember not that sea,
  That other shore on yonder side:
Between them narrow bound must be,
  If equal rise the' opposing tide —
Lo! lo! they rise — and I abide
  The peril of the meeting flood:
Away, away, my footsteps slide —
  I pant upon the clinging mud!

XV.

Oh let me now possession take
Of this — it cannot be a dream.
Yes! now the soul must be awake —
These pleasures are — they do not seem.
And is it true? Oh joy extreme!
All whom I loved, and thought them dead,
Far down in Lethe's flowing stream,
And, with them, life's best pleasures fled:

XVI.

Yes, many a tear for them I shed—
Tears that relieve the anxious breast;
And now, by heavenly favour led,
We meet — and One, the fairest, best,
Among them — ever-welcome guest!
Within the room, that seem'd destroy'd—
This room endear'd, and still possess'd,
By this dear party still enjoy'd.

XVII.

Speak to me! speak! that I may know
I am thus happy! — dearest, speak!
Those smiles that haunt fond memory show!
Joy makes us doubtful, wavering, weak;
But yet 'tis joy — And all I seek
Is mine! What glorious day is this!
Now let me bear with spirit meek
An hour of pure and perfect bliss.

XVIII.

But do ye look indeed as friends?
Is there no change? Are not ye cold?
Oh! I do dread that Fortune lends
Fictitious good!—that I behold,
To lose, these treasures, which of old
Were all my glory, all my pride:
May not these arms that form infold?
Is all affection asks denied?

XIX.

Say, what is this?—How are we tried,
In this sad world!—I know not these—
All strangers, none to me allied—
Those aspects blood and spirit freeze:
Dear forms, my wandering judgment spare;
And thou, most dear, these fiends disarm,
Resume thy wonted looks and air,
And break this melancholy charm.

XX.

And are they vanish'd? Is she lost?
Shall never day that form restore?
Oh! I am all by fears engross'd;
Sad truth has broken in once more,
And I the brief delight deplore:
How durst they such resemblance take?
Heavens! with what grace the mask they wore!
Oh, from what visions I awake!

XXI.

Once more, once more upon the shore!
Now back the rolling ocean flows:
The rocky bed now far before
On the receding water grows —
The treasures and the wealth it owes
To human misery — all in view;
Fate all on me at once bestows,
From thousands robb'd and murder'd too.

XXII.

But, lo! whatever I can find
Grows mean and worthless as I view:
They promise, but they cheat the mind,
As promises are born to do.
How lovely every form and hue,
Till seized and master'd — Then arise,
For all that admiration drew,
All that our senses can despise!

XXIII.

Within the basis of a tower,
I saw a plant—it graced the spot;
There was within nor wind nor shower,
And this had life that flowers have not.
I drew it forth — Ah, luckless lot!
It was the mandrake; and the sound
Of anguish deeply smother'd shot
Into my breast with pang profound.

XXIV.

"I would I were a soaring bird,"
Said Folly, "and I then would fly:"
Some mocking Muse or Fairy heard —
"You can but fall — suppose you try?
And though you may not mount the sky,
You will not grovel in the mire."
Hail, words of comfort! Now can I
Spurn earth, and to the air aspire.

XXV.

And this, before, might I have done
If I had courage — that is all:
'T is easier now to soar than run;
Up! up! — we neither tire nor fall.
Children of dust, be yours to crawl
On the vile earth! — while, happier, I
Must listen to an inward call,
That bids me mount, that makes me fly.

XXVI.

I tumble from the loftiest tower,
Yet evil have I never found;
Supported by some favouring power,
I come in safety to the ground.
I rest upon the sea, the sound
Of many waters in mine ear,
Yet have no dread of being drown'd,
But see my way, and cease to fear.

XXVII.

Awake, there is no living man
Who may my fixed spirit shake;
But, sleeping, there is one who can,
And oft does he the trial make:
Against his might resolves I take,
And him oppose with high disdain;
But quickly all my powers forsake
My mind, and I resume my chain.

XXVIII.

I know not how, but I am brought
Into a large and Gothic hall,
Seated with those I never sought —
Kings, Caliphs, Kaisers, — silent all;
Pale as the dead; enrobed and tall,
Majestic, frozen, solemn, still;
They wake my fears, my wits appal,
And with both scorn and terror fill.

XXIX.

Now are they seated at a board
In that cold grandeur — I am there.
But what can mummied kings afford?
This is their meagre ghostly fare,
And proves what fleshless things they stare!
Yes! I am seated with the dead:
How great, and yet how mean they are!
Yes! I can scorn them while I dread.

XXX.

They're gone! — and in their room I see
A fairy being, form and dress
Brilliant as light; nor can there be
On earth that heavenly loveliness;
Nor words can that sweet look express,
Or tell what living gems adorn
That wond'rous beauty: who can guess
Where such celestial charms were born?

XXXI.

Yet, as I wonder and admire,
The grace is gone, the glory dead;
And now it is but mean attire
Upon a shrivel'd beldame spread,
Laid loathsome on a pauper's bed,
Where wretchedness and woe are found,
And the faint putrid odour shed
By all that's foul and base around!

XXXII.

A garden this? oh! lovely breeze!
Oh! flowers that with such freshness bloom! —
Flowers shall I call such forms as these,
Or this delicious air perfume?
Oh! this from better worlds must come;
On earth such beauty who can meet?
No! this is not the native home
Of things so pure, so bright, so sweet!

XXXIII.

Where? where? — am I reduced to this—
Thus sunk in póverty extreme?
Can I not these vile things dismiss?
No! they are things that more than seem:
This room with that cross-parting beam
Holds yonder squalid tribe and me—
But they were ever thus, nor dream
Of being wealthy, favour'd, free! —

XXXIV.

Shall I a coat and badge receive,
And sit among these crippled men,
And not go forth without the leave
Of him — and ask it humbly then —
Who reigns in this infernal den—
Where all beside in woe repine?
Yes, yes, I must: nor tongue nor pen
Can paint such misery as mine!

XXXV.

Wretches! if ye were only poor,
You would my sympathy engage;
Or were ye vicious, and no more,
I might be fill'd with manly rage;
Or had ye patience, wise and sage
We might such worthy sufferers call:
But ye are birds that suit your cage—
Poor, vile, impatient, worthless all!

XXXVI.

How came I hither? Oh, that Hag!
'T is she the enchanting spell prepares;
By cruel witchcraft she can drag
My struggling being in her snares:
Oh, how triumphantly she glares!
But yet would leave me, could I make
Strong effort to subdue my cares.—
'T IS MADE!—and I to Freedom wake!

TALES.(1)

(1) [First published in August, 1812. See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 201.]

TO

HER GRACE ISABELLA,

DUCHESS DOWAGER OF RUTLAND. (1)

MADAM,

THE dedication of works of literature to persons of superior worth and eminence appears to have been a measure early adopted, and continued to the present time; so that, whatever objections have been made to the language of dedicators, such addresses must be considered as perfectly consistent with reason and propriety; in fact, superior rank and elevated situation in life naturally and justly claim such respect; and it is the prerogative of greatness to give countenance and favour to all who appear to merit and to need them: it is likewise the prerogative of every kind of superiority and celebrity, of personal merit when peculiar or extra-

(1) [See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 114.]

ordinary, of dignity, elegance, wealth, and beauty; certainly of superior intellect and intellectual acquirements: every such kind of eminence has its privilege, and being itself an object of distinguished approbation, it gains attention for whomsoever its possessor distinguishes and approves.

Yet the causes and motives for an address of this kind rest not entirely with the merit of the patron; the feelings of the author himself having their weight and consideration in the choice he makes: he may have gratitude for benefits received (1), or pride not illaudable in aspiring to the favour of those whose notice confers honour; or he may entertain a secret but strong desire of seeing a name in the entrance of his work, which he is accustomed to utter with peculiar satisfaction, and to hear mentioned with veneration and delight.

Such, Madam, are the various kinds of eminence for which an author on these occasions would pro-

(1) [On the death of the Duke of Rutland, in 1787, the Duchess, desirous of retaining in the neighbourhood the *protégé* of her lamented husband, gave Mr. Crabbe a letter to the lord chancellor, earnestly requesting him to exchange two small livings held by the poet in Dorsetshire, for two of superior value in the vale of Belvoir. Mr. Crabbe proceeded to London, but was not, on this occasion, very courteously received by Lord Thurlow. "No," he growled; "by G-d, I will not do this for any man in England." But he did it, nevertheless, for a woman in England. The good Duchess, on arriving in town, waited on him personally, to renew her request; and he yielded. See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 157.]

bably seek, and they meet in your Grace; such too are the feelings by which he would be actuated, and they centre in me: let me therefore entreat your Grace to take this book into your favour and protection, and to receive it as an offering of the utmost respect and duty, from,

May it please your Grace,

YOUR GRACE'S

Most obedient, humble,

and devoted servant,

GEO. CRABBE.

Muston, July 31. 1812.

PREFACE.

THAT the appearance of the present work before the public is occasioned by a favourable reception of the former two; I hesitate not to acknowledge; because, while the confession may be regarded as some proof of gratitude, or at least of attention, from an author to his readers, it ought not to be considered as an indication of vanity. It is unquestionably very pleasant to be assured that our labours are well received; but, nevertheless, this must not be taken for a just and full criterion of their merit: publications of great intrinsic value have been met with so much coolness, that a writer who succeeds in obtaining some degree of notice should look upon himself rather as one favoured than meritorious, as gaining a prize from Fortune, and not a recompense for desert; and, on the contrary, as it is well known that books of very inferior kind have been at once pushed into the strong current of popularity, and are there kept buoyant by the force of the stream, the writer who acquires not this adventitious help may be reckoned rather as unfortunate than unde-

serving: and from these opposite considerations it follows, that a man may speak of his success without incurring justly the odium of conceit, and may likewise acknowledge a disappointment without an adequate cause for humiliation or self-reproach.

But were it true that something of the complacency of self-approbation would insinuate itself into an author's mind with the idea of success, the sensation would not be that of unalloyed pleasure; it would perhaps assist him to bear, but it would not enable him to escape, the mortification he must encounter from censures, which, though he may be unwilling to admit, yet he finds himself unable to confute; as well as from advice, which, at the same time that he cannot but approve, he is compelled to reject.

Reproof and advice, it is probable, every author will receive, if we except those who merit so much of the former, that the latter is contemptuously denied them; now, of these, reproof, though it may cause more temporary uneasiness, will in many cases create less difficulty, since errors may be corrected when opportunity occurs: but advice, I repeat, may be of such nature, that it will be painful to reject and yet impossible to follow it; and in this predicament I conceive myself to be placed. There has been recommended to me, and from authority which neither inclination nor prudence leads me to resist, in any new work I might undertake, an unity of subject, and that arrangement of my materials which

connects the whole and gives additional interest to every part (1); in fact, if not an Epic Poem, strictly so denominated, yet such composition as would possess a regular succession of events, and a catastrophe to which every incident should be subservient, and which every character, in a greater or less degree, should conspire to accomplish. (2)

In a Poem of this nature, the principal and inferior characters in some degree resemble a general and his army, where no one pursues his peculiar objects and adventures, or pursues them in unison with the movements and grand purposes of the whole body; where there is a community of interests and a subordination of actors: and it was upon this view of the subject, and of the necessity for such distribution of persons and events, that I found myself obliged to relinquish an undertaking, for which the

(1) [See Edinburgh Review, vol. xvi. p. 55. "We own we have a very strong desire to see Mr. Crabbe apply his great powers to the construction of some interesting and connected story. He has great talent for narration; and that unrivalled gift in the delineation of character which is now used only for the creation of detached portraits, might be turned to admirable account in maintaining the interest and enhancing the probability of an extended train of adventures."]

(2) ["We did not," say the Edinburgh Reviewers, "wish Mr. Crabbe to write an Epic — as he seems from his preface to have imagined. We are perfectly satisfied with the length of the pieces he has given us; and delighted with their number and variety. In these respects the volume is exactly as we could have wished it. But we should have liked a little more of the deep and tragical passions — of those passions which exalt and overwhelm the soul — to whose stormy seat the modern muses can so rarely raise their flight — and which he has wielded with such terrific force in his Sir Eustace Grey, and the Gipsy Woman. What we wanted, in short, were tales something in the style of those two singular compositions — with less jocularity than prevails in the rest of his writings — rather more incidents — and rather fewer details."]

characters I could command, and the adventures I could describe, were altogether unfitted.

But if these characters which seemed to be at my disposal were not such as would coalesce into one body, nor were of a nature to be commanded by one mind, so neither on examination did they appear as an unconnected multitude, accidentally collected, to be suddenly dispersed; but rather beings of whom might be formed groups and smaller societies, the relations of whose adventures and pursuits might bear that kind of similitude to an Heroic Poem, which these minor associations of men (as pilgrims on the way to their saint, or parties in search of amusement, travellers excited by curiosity, or adventurers in pursuit of gain) have in points of connection and importance with a regular and disciplined army.

Allowing this comparison, it is manifest that, while much is lost for want of unity of subject and grandeur of design, something is gained by greater variety of incident and more minute display of character, by accuracy of description and diversity of scene: in these narratives we pass from gay to grave, from lively to severe, not only without impropriety, but with manifest advantage. In one continued and connected poem, the reader is, in general, highly gratified or severely disappointed: by many independent narratives, he has the renovation of hope, although he has been dissatisfied, and

a prospect of reiterated pleasure, should he find himself entertained.

I mean not, however, to compare these different modes of writing as if I were balancing their advantages and defects before I could give preference to either; with me the way I take is not a matter of choice, but of necessity: I present not my Tales to the reader as if I had chosen the best method of ensuring his approbation, but as using the only means I possessed of engaging his attention.

It may probably be remarked, that Tales, however dissimilar, might have been connected by some associating circumstance to which the whole number might bear equal affinity, and that examples of such union are to be found in Chaucer, in Boccace, and other collectors and inventors of Tales, which, considered in themselves, are altogether independent; and to this idea I gave so much consideration as convinced me that I could not avail myself of the benefit of such artificial mode of affinity. To imitate the English poet, characters must be found adapted to their several relations, and this is a point of great difficulty and hazard: much allowance seems to be required even for Chaucer himself; since it is difficult to conceive that on any occasion the devout and delicate Prioress, the courtly and valiant Knight, and "the poure good Man the persone of a Towne," would be the voluntary companions of the drunken Miller, the licentious Sompnour, and "the Wanton Wife of Bath," and enter into that colloquial and

travelling intimacy which, if a common pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas may be said to excuse, I know nothing beside (and certainly nothing in these times) that would produce such effect. Boccace, it is true, avoids all difficulty of this kind, by not assigning to the ten relators of his hundred Tales any marked or peculiar characters; nor, though there are male and female in company, can the sex of the narrator be distinguished in the narration. To have followed the method of Chaucer might have been of use, but could scarcely be adopted, from its difficulty; and to have taken that of the Italian writer would have been perfectly easy, but could be of no service: the attempt at union, therefore, has been relinquished, and these relations are submitted to the public, connected by no other circumstance than their being the productions of the same author, and devoted to the same purpose, the entertainment of his readers.

It has been already acknowledged, that these compositions have no pretensions to be estimated with the more lofty and heroic kind of poems; but I feel great reluctance in admitting, that they have not a fair and legitimate claim to the poetic character: in vulgar estimation, indeed, all that is not prose passes for poetry; but I have not ambition of so humble a kind as to be satisfied with a concession which requires nothing in the poet, except his ability for counting syllables; and I trust something more of the poetic character will be allowed to the succeeding pages, than what the heroes of the Dunciad might

share with the author: nor was I aware that, by describing, as faithfully as I could, men, manners, and things, I was forfeiting a just title to a name which has been freely granted to many, whom to equal, and even to excel, is but very stinted commendation.

In this case it appears, that the usual comparison between Poetry and Painting entirely fails: the artist who takes an accurate likeness of individuals, or a faithful representation of scenery, may not rank so high in the public estimation as one who paints an historical event, or an heroic action; but he is nevertheless a painter, and his accuracy is so far from diminishing his reputation, that it procures for him in general both fame and emolument: nor is it perhaps with strict justice determined that the credit and reputation of those verses which strongly and faithfully delineate character and manners, should be lessened in the opinion of the public by the very accuracy which gives value and distinction to the productions of the pencil.

Nevertheless, it must be granted that the pretensions of any composition to be regarded as poetry will depend upon that definition of the poetic character which he who undertakes to determine the question has considered as decisive; and it is confessed also, that one of great authority may be adopted, by which the verses now before the reader, and many others which have probably amused and delighted him, must be excluded: a definition like

this will be found in the words which the greatest of poets, not divinely inspired, has given to the most noble and valiant Duke of Athens—

" The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
" Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
" And as Imagination bodies forth
" The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
" Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
" A local habitation, and a name." (1)

Hence we observe the Poet is one who, in the excursions of his fancy between heaven and earth, lights upon a kind of fairy-land, in which he places a creation of his own, where he embodies shapes, and gives action and adventure to his ideal offspring: taking captive the imagination of his readers, he elevates them above the grossness of actual being, into the soothing and pleasant atmosphere of supra-mundane existence: there he obtains for his visionary inhabitants the interest that engages a reader's attention without ruffling his feelings, and excites that moderate kind of sympathy which the realities of nature oftentimes fail to produce, either because they are so familiar and insignificant that they excite no determinate emotion, or are so harsh and powerful that the feelings excited are grating and distasteful.

Be it then granted that (as Duke Theseus observes) " such tricks hath strong Imagination," and

(1) Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V. Scene 1.

that such poets "are of imagination all compact;" let it be further conceded, that theirs is a higher and more dignified kind of composition, nay, the only kind that has pretensions to inspiration; still, that these poets should so entirely engross the title as to exclude those who address their productions to the plain sense and sober judgment of their readers, rather than to their fancy and imagination, I must repeat that I am unwilling to admit — because I conceive that, by granting such right of exclusion, a vast deal of what has been hitherto received as genuine poetry would no longer be entitled to that appellation.

All that kind of satire wherein character is skilfully delineated must (this criterion being allowed) no longer be esteemed as genuine poetry; and for the same reason many affecting narratives which are founded on real events, and borrow no aid whatever from the imagination of the writer, must likewise be rejected: a considerable part of the poems, as they have hitherto been denominated, of Chaucer, are of this naked and unveiled character: and there are in his Tales many pages of coarse, accurate, and minute, but very striking description. Many small poems in a subsequent age, of most impressive kind, are adapted and addressed to the common sense of the reader, and prevail by the strong language of truth and nature: they amused our ancestors, and they continue to engage our interest, and excite our feelings, by the same powerful appeals to the heart and affections. In times less remote, Dryden has

given us much of this poetry, in which the force of expression and accuracy of description have neither needed nor obtained assistance from the fancy of the writer; the characters in his Absalom and Achitophel are instances of this, and more especially those of Doeg and Og in the second part: these, with all their grossness, and almost offensive accuracy, are found to possess that strength and spirit which has preserved from utter annihilation the dead bodies of Tate, to whom they were inhumanly bound, happily with a fate the reverse of that caused by the cruelty of Mezentius; for there the living perished in the putrefaction of the dead, and here the dead are preserved by the vitality of the living. (1) And, to bring forward one other example, it will be found that Pope himself has no small portion of this actuality of relation, this nudity of description, and poetry without an atmosphere; the lines beginning, "In the worst inn's worst room," are an example, and many others may be seen in his Satires, Imitations, and above all in his Dunciad: the frequent absence of those "Sports of Fancy," and "Tricks

(1) ["Dryden, being unwilling to undertake a task upon which he had repeatedly laboured, deputed Nahum Tate to be his assistant in a second part of Absalom and Achitophel; reserving for himself only the execution of certain particular characters, and the general plan and revisal of the poem. The continuation owes all its spirit to the touches and additions of the author of the first part. Those lines, to the number of two hundred, beginning —

'Next these a troop of busy spirits press,'

and concluding —

'To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee,'

are entirely composed by Dryden, and contain some of the most masterly strokes of his pen."—Sir Walter Scott.]

of strong imagination," have been so much observed, that some have ventured to question whether even this writer were a poet; and though, as Dr. Johnson has remarked, it would be difficult to form a definition of one in which Pope should not be admitted (1), yet they who doubted his claim had, it is likely, provided for his exclusion by forming that kind of character for their Poet, in which this elegant versifier, for so he must be then named, should not be comprehended. (2)

These things considered, an author will find comfort in his expulsion from the rank and society of

(1) [In one of Mr. Crabbe's note-books, containing the original draft of this preface, there is the following passage:—"It has been asked, if Pope was a poet? No one, I conceive, will accuse me of vanity in bringing forward this query, or suppose me capable of comparing myself with a man so eminent: but persons very unlike in other respects may, in one particular, admit of comparison, or rather the same question may be applied to both. Now, who will complain that a definition of poetry, which excludes a great part of the writings of Pope, will shut out him? I do *not* lightly take up the idea, but I conceive that by that kind of definition, one half of our most agreeable English versification (most generally held, by general readers, to be agreeable and good) will be excluded, and an equal quantity, at least of very moderate, or, to say truly, of very wretched composition, will be taken in."]

(2) ["The great cause of the present deplorable state of English poetry is to be attributed to that absurd and systematic depreciation of Pope, in which, for the last few years, there has been a kind of epidemical concurrence. Men of the most opposite opinions have united upon this topic. Warton and Churchill began it, having borrowed the hint probably from the heroes of the Dunciad, and their own internal conviction that their proper reputation can be as nothing till the most perfect and harmonious of poets—he who, having no fault, has had REASON made his reproach—was reduced to what they conceived to be his level; but even they could not degrade him below Dryden. Goldsmith, and Rogers, and Campbell, his most successful disciples; and Hayley, who, however feeble, has left one poem 'that will not be willingly let die' (the Triumphs of Temper), kept up the reputation of that pure and perfect style; and Crabbe, the last of living poets, has almost equalled the master."—BYRON, 1820.]

Poets, by reflecting that men much his superiors were likewise shut out, and more especially when he finds also that men not much his superiors are entitled to admission.

But, in whatever degree I may venture to differ from any others in my notions of the qualifications and character of the true Poet, I most cordially assent to their opinion who assert, that his principal exertions must be made to engage the attention of his readers; and further, I must allow that the effect of poetry should be to lift the mind from the painful realities of actual existence, from its every-day concerns, and its perpetually-occurring vexations, and to give it repose by substituting objects in their place which it may contemplate with some degree of interest and satisfaction: but, what is there in all this, which may not be effected by a fair representation of existing character? nay, by a faithful delineation of those painful realities, those every-day concerns, and those perpetually-occurring vexations themselves, provided they be not (which is hardly to be supposed) the very concerns and distresses of the reader? for when it is admitted that they have no particular relation to him, but are the troubles and anxieties of other men, they excite and interest his feelings as the imaginary exploits, adventures, and perils of romance;—they soothe his mind, and keep his curiosity pleasantly awake; they appear to have enough of reality to engage his sympathy, but possess not interest suf-

ficient to create painful sensations.(1) Fiction itself, we know, and every work of fancy, must for a time

(1) [Mr. Crabbe often expressed great admiration of the following lines by Mr. Matthias:—

——— "The dread resistless pow'r
That works deep-felt at inspiration's hour,
He claims alone —
Who claims?
The favour'd BARD,
Who, nobly conscious of his just reward,
With loftier soul, and undecaying might,
Paints what he feels, in characters of light.
He turns: and, instantaneous, all around,
Cliffs whiten, waters murmur, voices sound;
Portentous forms in heaven's aërial hall
Appear, as at some great supernal call.
"Thence oft in thought his steps ideal haste
To rocks and groves, the wilderness or waste;
To plains, where Tadmor's regal ruins lie
In desolation's sullen majesty:
Or where Carthusian spires the pilgrim draw
And bow the soul with unresisted awe;
Whence Bruno, from the mountain's pine-clad brow,
Survey'd the world's inglorious toil below;
Then, as down ragged cliffs the torrent roar'd,
Prostrate great Nature's present God adored,
And bade, in solitude's extremest bourn,
Religion hallow the severe sojourn. —
"Thence musing, lo, he bends his weary eyes
On LIFE, *and all its sad realities;*
Marks how the prospect darkens in the rear,
Shade blends with shade, and fear succeeds to fear,
'Mid forms that rise, and flutter through the gloom,
Till Death unbar the cold sepulchral room.
"Such is the POET: such his claim divine! —
Imagination's 'charter'd libertine,'
He scorns, in apathy, to float or dream
On listless Satisfaction's torpid stream,
But dares, ALONE, in venturous bark to ride
Down turbulent Delight's tempestuous tide;
With thoughts encount'ring thoughts in conflict strong,
The deep Pierian thunder of the song
Rolls o'er his raptured sense; the realms on high
For him disclose their varied majesty;
He feels the call: — then bold, beyond control,
Stamps on the immortal page the visions of his soul!"]

have the effect of realities; nay, the very enchanters, spirits, and monsters of Ariosto and Spenser must be present in the mind of the reader while he is engaged by their operations, or they would be as the objects and incidents of a nursery tale to a rational understanding, altogether despised and neglected: in truth, I can but consider this pleasant effect upon the mind of a reader, as depending neither upon the events related (whether they be actual or imaginary), nor upon the characters introduced (whether taken from life or fancy), but upon the manner in which the poem itself is conducted; let that be judiciously managed, and the occurrences actually copied from life will have the same happy effect as the inventions of a creative fancy;—while, on the other hand, the imaginary persons and incidents to which the poet has given "a local habitation and a name," will make upon the concurring feelings of the reader the same impressions with those taken from truth and nature, because they will appear to be derived from that source, and therefore of necessity will have a similar effect.

Having thus far presumed to claim for the ensuing pages the rank and title of poetry, I attempt no more, nor venture to class or compare them with any other kinds of poetical composition; their place will doubtless be found for them.

A principal view and wish of the poet must be to engage the mind of his readers, as, failing in that point, he will scarcely succeed in any other:

I therefore wi" ly confess that much of my time and assiduity has l een devoted to this purpose; but, to the ambition of pleasing, no other sacrifices have, I trust, been made, than of my own labour and care. Nothing will be found that militates against the rules of propriety and good manners, nothing that offends against the more important precepts of morality and religion; and with this negative kind of merit, I commit my book to the judgment and taste of the reader—not being willing to provoke his vigilance by professions of accuracy, nor to solicit his indulgence by apologies for mistakes.

TALES.(1)

(1) ["These Tales may be considered as supplementary chapters to 'The Parish Register,' or 'The Borough.' The same tone, the same subjects, the same finished and minute delineation of things quite ordinary and common; the same kindly sympathy with the humble and innocent pleasures of the Poor, and the same indulgence for their venial offences, contrasted with a strong sense of their frequent depravity, and too constant a recollection of the sufferings it produces; and, finally, the same honours paid to the delicate affections and ennobling passions of humble life, with the same generous testimony to their frequent existence, mixed up as before with a reprobation sufficiently rigid, and a ridicule sufficiently severe, of their excesses and affectations. If we were required to make a comparative estimate of the merits of the present work, or to point out the shades of difference by which it is distinguished from those that have gone before it, we should say, that there are in it a greater number of instances in which the poet has combined the natural language and manners of humble life with the energy of true passion, and the beauty of generous affection, — in which he has traced out the course of those rich and lovely veins even in the rude and unpolished masses that lie at the bottom of society, — and unfolded, in the middling orders of the people, the workings of those finer feelings, and the stirrings of those loftier emotions, which the partiality of other poets had hitherto attributed almost exclusively to actors on a higher scene. It appears to us, that the volume now before us is more uniformly and directly moral and beneficial in its tendency, than any of those which Mr. Crabbe has hitherto given to the public — consists less of mere curious specimens of description and gratuitous dissections of character, but inculcates, for the most part, some weighty and practical precept, and points right on to the cheerful path by which duty leads us forward to enjoyment." — *Edinburgh Review*, 1812.]

TALE I.

THE DUMB ORATORS;

OR,

THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY.

With fair round belly, with good capon lined,
With eyes severe ——
Full of wise saws and modern instances. — *As You Like It.*

Deep shame hath struck me dumb. — *King John.*

He gives the bastinado with his tongue;
Our ears are cudgell'd. — *King John.*

—— Let's kill all the lawyers;
Now show yourselves men: 't is for liberty:
We will not leave one lord or gentleman. — 2 *Henry VI.*

And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.
Twelfth Night. (1)

(1) These mottoes are many, because there is a reference in them not only to the characters, but frequently to the incidents also; and they are all taken from Shakspeare, because I could more readily find them in his scenes, than in the works of any other poet to whom I could have recourse.

TALE I.

THE DUMB ORATORS.

THAT all men would be cowards if they dare,
Some men we know have courage to declare;
And this the life of many a hero shows,
That, like the tide, man's courage ebbs and flows:
With friends and gay companions round them, then
Men boldly speak and have the hearts of men;
Who, with opponents seated, miss the aid
Of kind applauding looks, and grow afraid;
Like timid trav'llers in the night, they fear
Th' assault of foes, when not a friend is near.

In contest mighty, and of conquest proud,
Was *Justice Bolt* (1), impetuous, warm, and loud;
His fame, his prowess all the country knew,
And disputants, with one so fierce, were few:
He was a younger son, for law design'd,
With dauntless look and persevering mind;
While yet a clerk, for disputation famed,
No efforts tired him, and no conflicts tamed.
Scarcely he bade his master's desk adieu,
When both his brothers from the world withdrew.

(1) [The original of Justice Bolt was Dr. Franks, of Alderton, on the Norfolk coast—a truly worthy man, but a rather pompous magistrate.]

An ample fortune he from them possess'd,
And was with saving care and prudence bless'd.
Now would he go and to the country give
Example how an English 'squire should live;
How bounteous, yet how frugal man may be,
By a well-order'd hospitality;
He would the rights of all so well maintain,
That none should idle be, and none complain.

All this and more he purposed—and what man
Could do, he did to realise his plan:
But time convinced him that we cannot keep
A breed of reasoners like a flock of sheep;
For they, so far from following as we lead,
Make that a cause why they will not proceed.
Man will not follow where a rule is shown,
But loves to take a method of his own:
Explain the way with all your care and skill,
This will he quit, if but to prove he will.—
Yet had our Justice honour—and the crowd,
Awed by his presence, their respect avow'd.

In later years he found his heart incline,
More than in youth, to gen'rous food and wine;
But no indulgence check'd the powerful love
He felt to teach, to argue, and reprove.

Meetings, or public calls, he never miss'd—
To dictate often, always to assist.
Oft he the clergy join'd, and not a cause
Pertain'd to them but he could quote the laws;

He upon tithes and residence display'd
A fund of knowledge for the hearer's aid;
And could on glebe and farming, wool and grain,
A long discourse, without a pause, maintain.

To his experience and his native sense
He join'd a bold imperious eloquence;
The grave, stern look of men inform'd and wise,
A full command of feature, heart, and eyes,
An awe-compelling frown, and fear-inspiring size.
When at the table, not a guest was seen
With appetite so lingering, or so keen;
But when the outer man no more required,
The inner waked, and he was man inspired.
His subjects then were those, a subject true
Presents in fairest form to public view;
Of church and state, of law, with mighty strength
Of words he spoke, in speech of mighty length:
And now, into the vale of years declined,
He hides too little of the monarch-mind:
He kindles anger by untimely jokes,
And opposition by contempt provokes;
Mirth he suppresses by his awful frown,
And humble spirits, by disdain, keeps down;
Blamed by the mild, approved by the severe,
The prudent fly him, and the valiant fear.

For overbearing is his proud discourse,
And overwhelming of his voice the force;
And overpowering is he when he shows
What floats upon a mind that always overflows.

This ready man at every meeting rose,
Something to hint, determine, or propose;
And grew so fond of teaching, that he taught
Those who instruction needed not or sought:
Happy our hero, when he could excite
Some thoughtless talker to the wordy fight:
Let him a subject at his pleasure choose,
Physic or law, religion or the muse;
On all such themes he was prepared to shine, —
Physician, poet, lawyer, and divine.
Hemm'd in by some tough argument, borne down
By press of language and the awful frown,
In vain for mercy shall the culprit plead;
His crime is past, and sentence must proceed:
Ah! suffering man, have patience, bear thy woes—
For lo! the clock—at ten the Justice goes.

This powerful man, on business, or to please
A curious taste, or weary grown of ease,
On a long journey travell'd many a mile
Westward, and halted midway in our isle;
Content to view a city large and fair,
Though none had notice—what a man was there!

Silent two days, he then began to long
Again to try a voice so loud and strong;
To give his favourite topics some new grace,
And gain some glory in such distant place;
To reap some present pleasure, and to sow
Seeds of fair fame, in after-time to grow:
Here will men say, "We heard, at such an hour,
'The best of speakers—wonderful his power."

Inquiry made, he found that day would meet
A learned club, and in the very street:
Knowledge to gain and give, was the design;
To speak, to hearken, to debate, and dine:
This pleased our traveller, for he felt his force
In either way, to eat or to discourse.

Nothing more easy than to gain access
To men like these, with his polite address:
So he succeeded, and first look'd around,
To view his objects and to take his ground;
And therefore silent chose awhile to sit,
Then enter boldly by some lucky hit;
Some observation keen or stroke severe,
To cause some wonder or excite some fear.

Now, dinner past, no longer he suppress
His strong dislike to be a silent guest;
Subjects and words were now at his command —
When disappointment frown'd on all he plann'd;
For, hark! — he heard amazed, on every side,
His church insulted and her priests belied;
The laws reviled, the ruling power abused,
The land derided, and its foes excused: —
He heard and ponder'd — What, to men so vile,
Should be his language? — For his threat'ning style
They were too many; — if his speech were meek,
They would despise such poor attempts to speak:
At other times with every word at will,
He now sat lost, perplex'd, astonish'd, still.

Here were Socinians, Deists, and indeed
All who, as foes to England's church, agreed;
But still with creeds unlike, and some without a creed:
Here, too, fierce friends of liberty he saw,
Who own'd no prince and who obey no law;
There were reformers of each different sort,
Foes to the laws, the priesthood, and the court;
Some on their favourite plans alone intent,
Some purely angry and malevolent:
The rash were proud to blame their country's laws;
The vain, to seem supporters of a cause;
One call'd for change, that he would dread to see;
Another sigh'd for Gallic liberty!
And numbers joining with the forward crew,
For no one reason — but that numbers do.

"How," said the Justice, "can this trouble rise,
"This shame and pain, from creatures I despise?"
And Conscience answer'd — "The prevailing cause
"Is thy delight in listening to applause;
"Here, thou art seated with a tribe, who spurn
"Thy favourite themes, and into laughter turn
"Thy fears and wishes: silent and obscure,
"Thyself, shalt thou the long harangue endure;
"And learn, by feeling, what it is to force
"On thy unwilling friends the long discourse:
"What though thy thoughts be just, and these, it seems,
"Are traitors' projects, idiots' empty schemes;
"Yet minds, like bodies, cramm'd, reject their food,
"Nor will be forced and tortured for their good!"

At length, a sharp, shrewd, sallow man arose,
And begg'd he briefly might his mind disclose;
"It was his duty, in these worst of times,
"T' inform the govern'd of their rulers' crimes:"
This pleasant subject to attend, they each
Prepared to listen, and forbore to teach.

Then voluble and fierce the wordy man
Through a long chain of favourite horrors ran:—
First, of the Church, from whose enslaving power,
He was deliver'd, and he bless'd the hour;
"Bishops and deans, and prebendaries all,"
He said, "were cattle fatt'ning in the stall;
"Slothful and pursy, insolent and mean,
"Were every bishop, prebendary, dean,
"And wealthy rector: curates, poorly paid,
"Were only dull;—he would not them upbraid."

From priests he turn'd to canons, creeds, and prayers,
Rubrics and rules, and all our Church affairs;
Churches themselves, desk, pulpit, altar, all
The Justice reverenced—and pronounced their fall.

Then from religion *Hammond* turn'd his view,
To give our Rulers the correction due;
Not one wise action had these triflers plann'd;
There was, it seem'd, no wisdom in the land;
Save in this patriot tribe, who meet at times
To show the statesman's errors and his crimes.

Now here was Justice Bolt compell'd to sit,
To hear the deist's scorn, the rebel's wit;
The fact mis-stated, the envenom'd lie,
And, staring spell-bound, made not one reply.

Then were our Laws abused — and with the laws,
All who prepare, defend, or judge a cause:
" We have no lawyer whom a man can trust,"
Proceeded Hammond — " if the laws were just;
" But they are evil; 't is the savage state
" Is only good, and ours sophisticate!
" See! the free creatures in their woods and plains,
" Where without laws each happy monarch reigns,
" King of himself — while we a number dread,
" By slaves commanded and by dunces led:
" Oh, let the name with either state agree —
" Savage our own we'll name, and civil theirs shall be."

The silent Justice still astonish'd sate,
And wonder'd much whom he was gazing at;
Twice he essay'd to speak — but in a cough,
The faint, indignant, dying speech went off:
" But who is this?" thought he — " a demon vile,
" With wicked meaning and a vulgar style:
" Hammond they call him: they can give the name
" Of man to devils. — Why am I so tame?
" Why crush I not the viper?" — Fear replied,
" Watch him awhile, and let his strength be tried;
" He will be foil'd, if man; but if his aid
" Be from beneath, 't is well to be afraid."

"We are call'd free!" said Hammond—"doleful
times,
"When rulers add their insult to their crimes;
"For should our scorn expose each powerful vice,
"It would be libel, and we pay the price."

Thus with licentious words the man went on,
Proving that liberty of speech was gone;
That all were slaves—nor had we better chance
For better times, than as allies to France.

Loud groan'd the Stranger—Why, he must
relate,
And own'd, "In sorrow for his country's fate;"
"Nay, she were safe," the ready man replied,
"Might patriots rule her, and could reasoners guide;
"When all to vote, to speak, to teach, are free,
"Whate'er their creeds or their opinions be;
"When books of statutes are consumed in flames,
"And courts and copyholds are empty names:
"Then will be times of joy—but ere they come,
"Havock, and war, and blood must be our doom."

The man here paused—then loudly for Reform
He call'd, and hail'd the prospect of the storm;
The wholesome blast, the fertilising flood—
Peace gain'd by tumult, plenty bought with blood:
Sharp means, he own'd; but when the land's disease
Asks cure complete, no med'cines are like these.

Our Justice now, more led by fear than rage,
Saw it in vain with madness to engage;

With imps of darkness no man seeks to fight,
Knaves to instruct, or set deceivers right:
Then as the daring speech denounced these woes,
Sick at the soul, the grieving Guest arose;
Quick on the board his ready cash he threw,
And from the demons to his closet flew:
There when secured, he pray'd with earnest zeal,
That all they wish'd, these patriot-souls might feel;
" Let them to France, their darling country, haste,
" And all the comforts of a Frenchman taste;
" Let them his safety, freedom, pleasure know,
" Feel all their rulers on the land bestow;
" And be at length dismiss'd by one unerring blow,—
" Not hack'd and hew'd by one afraid to strike,
" But shorn by that which shears all men alike;
" Nor, as in Britain, let them curse delay
" Of law, but borne without a form away—
" Suspected, tried, condemn'd, and carted in a day;
" Oh! let them taste what they so much approve,
" These strong fierce freedoms of the land they love." (1)

Home came our hero, to forget no more
The fear he felt and ever must deplore:
For though he quickly join'd his friends again,
And could with decent force his themes maintain,

1) The reader will perceive, in these and the preceding verses, allusions to the state of France, as that country was circumstanced some years since, rather than as it appears to be in the present date; several years elapsing between the alarm of the loyal magistrate on the occasion now related, and a subsequent event that farther illustrates the remark with which the narrative commences.

Still it occurr'd that, in a luckless time,
He fail'd to fight with heresy and crime;
It was observed his words were not so strong,
His tones so powerful, his harangues so long,
As in old times—for he would often drop
The lofty look, and of a sudden stop;
When conscience whisper'd, that he once was still,
And let the wicked triumph at their will;
And therefore now, when not a foe was near,
He had no right so valiant to appear.

Some years had pass'd, and he perceived his fears
Yield to the spirit of his earlier years—
When at a meeting, with his friends beside,
He saw an object that awaked his pride;
His shame, wrath, vengeance, indignation—all
Man's harsher feelings did that sight recall.

For, lo! beneath him fix'd, our Man of Law
That lawless man the Foe of Order saw;
Once fear'd, now scorn'd; once dreaded, now abhorr'd;
A wordy man, and evil every word:
Again he gazed—"It is," said he "the same;
"Caught and secure: his master owes him shame:"
So thought our hero, who each instant found
His courage rising, from the numbers round.

As when a felon has escaped and fled,
So long, that law conceives the culprit dead;
And back recall'd her myrmidons, intent
On some new game, and with a stronger scent;

Till she beholds him in a place, where none
Could have conceived the culprit would have gone;
There he sits upright in his seat, secure,
As one whose conscience is correct and pure;
This rouses anger for the old offence,
And scorn for all such seeming and pretence:
So on this Hammond look'd our hero bold,
Rememb'ring well that vile offence of old;
And now he saw the rebel dared t' intrude
Among the pure, the loyal, and the good;
The crime provoked his wrath, the folly stirr'd his blood:
Nor wonder was it, if so strange a sight
Caused joy with vengeance, terror with delight;
Terror like this a tiger might create,
A joy like that to see his captive state,
At once to know his force and then decree his fate.

Hammond, much praised by numerous friends, was come
To read his lectures, so admired at home;
Historic lectures, where he loved to mix
His free plain hints on modern politics:
Here, he had heard, that numbers had design,
Their business finish'd, to sit down and dine;
This gave him pleasure, for he judged it right
To show by day that he could speak at night.
Rash the design—for he perceived, too late,
Not one approving friend beside him sate;
The greater number, whom he traced around,
Were men in black, and he conceived they frown'd.

"I will not speak," he thought; "no pearls of mine
"Shall be presented to this herd of swine;"
Not this avail'd him, when he cast his eye
On Justice Bolt; he could not fight, nor fly:
He saw a man to whom he gave the pain,
Which now he felt must be return'd again;
His conscience told him with what keen delight
He, at that time, enjoy'd a stranger's fright;
That stranger now befriended—he alone,
For all his insult, friendless, to atone;
Now he could feel it cruel that a heart
Should be distress'd, and none to take its part;
"Though one by one," said Pride, "I would defy
"Much greater men, yet meeting every eye,
"I do confess a fear—but he will pass me by"

Vain hope! the Justice saw the foe's distress,
With exultation he could not suppress;
He felt the fish was hook'd—and so forbore,
In playful spite, to draw it to the shore.
Hammond look'd round again; but none were near,
With friendly smile to still his growing fear;
But all above him seem'd a solemn row
Of priests and deacons, so they seem'd below;
He wonder'd who his right-hand man might be—
Vicar of Holt cum Uppingham was he;
And who the man of that dark frown possess'd—
Rector of Bradley and of Barton-west;
"A pluralist," he growl'd—but check'd the word,
That warfare might not, by his zeal, be stirr'd.

But now began the man above to show
Fierce looks and threat'nings to the man below;
Who had some thoughts his peace by flight to seek—
But how then lecture, if he dared not speak!—

Now as the Justice for the war prepared,
He seem'd just then to question if he dared:
" He may resist, although his power be small,
" And growing desperate may defy us all;
" One dog attack, and he prepares for flight—
" Resist another, and he strives to bite;
" Nor can I say, if this rebellious cur
" Will fly for safety, or will scorn to stir."
Alarm'd by this, he lash'd his soul to rage,
Burn'd with strong shame, and hurried to engage.

As a male turkey straggling on the green,
When by fierce harriers, terriers, mongrels seen,
He feels the insult of the noisy train
And sculks aside, though moved by much disdain;
But when that turkey at his own barn-door,
Sees one poor straying puppy and no more,
(A foolish puppy who had left the pack,
Thoughtless what foe was threat'ning at his back,)
He moves about, as ship prepared to sail,
He hoists his proud rotundity of tail,
The half-seal'd eyes and changeful neck he shows,
Where, in its quick'ning colours, vengeance glows;
From red to blue the pendent wattles turn,
Blue mix'd with red, as matches when they burn;
And thus th' intruding snarler to oppose,
Urged by enkindling wrath, he gobbling goes.

So look'd our hero in his wrath, his cheeks
Flush'd with fresh fires and glow'd in tingling streaks,
His breath by passion's force awhile restrain'd,
Like a stopp'd current greater force regain'd;
So spoke, so look'd he, every eye and ear
Were fix'd to view him, or were turn'd to hear.

" My friends, you know me, you can witness all,
" How, urged by passion, I restrain my gall;
" And every motive to revenge withstand—
" Save when I hear abused my native land.

" Is it not known, agreed, confirm'd, confess'd,
" That, of all people, we are govern'd best?
" We have the force of monarchies; are free,
" As the most proud republicans can be;
" And have those prudent counsels that arise
" In grave and cautious aristocracies;
" And live there those, in such all-glorious state,
" Traitors protected in the land they hate?
" Rebels, still warring with the laws that give
" To them subsistence?—Yes, such wretches live.

" Ours is a Church reform'd, and now no more
" Is aught for man to mend or to restore;
" 'T is pure in doctrines, 't is correct in creeds,
" Has nought redundant, and it nothing needs;
" No evil is therein—no wrinkle, spot,
" Stain, blame, or blemish:—I affirm there 's not.

" All this you know—now mark what once befell,
" With grief I bore it, and with shame I tell:

" I was entrapp'd—yes, so it came to pass,
" 'Mid heathen rebels, a tumultuous class;
" Each to his country bore a hellish mind,
" Each like his neighbour was of cursed kind;
" The land that nursed them, they blasphemed; the laws,
" Their sovereign's glory, and their country's cause;
" And who their mouth, their master-fiend, and who
" Rebellion's oracle?————You, caitiff, you!"

He spoke, and standing stretch'd his mighty arm,
And fix'd the Man of Words, as by a charm.

" How raved that railer! Sure some hellish power
" Restrain'd my tongue in that delirious hour,
" Or I had hurl'd the shame and vengeance due
" On him, the guide of that infuriate crew;
" But to mine eyes, such dreadful looks appear'd,
" Such mingled yell of lying words I heard,
" That I conceived around were demons all,
" And till I fled the house, I fear'd its fall.

" Oh! could our country from our coasts expel
" Such foes! to nourish those who wish her well:
" This her mild laws forbid, but we may still
" From us eject them by our sovereign will;
" This let us do."—He said, and then began
A gentler feeling for the silent man;
Ev'n in our hero's mighty soul arose
A touch of pity for experienced woes;
But this was transient, and with angry eye
He sternly look'd, and paused for a reply.

'Twas then the Man of many Words would
But, in his trial, had them all to seek: [speak—
To find a friend he look'd the circle round,
But joy or scorn in every feature found;
He sipp'd his wine, but in those times of dread
Wine only adds confusion to the head;
In doubt he reason'd with himself—"And how
"Harangue at night, if I be silent now?"
From pride and praise received, he sought to draw
Courage to speak, but still remain'd the awe;
One moment rose he with a forced disdain,
And then, abash'd, sunk sadly down again;
While in our hero's glance he seem'd to read,
"Slave and insurgent! what hast thou to plead?"—

By desperation urged, he now began:
"I seek no favour—I—the rights of man!
"Claim; and I—nay!—but give me leave—and I
"Insist—a man—that is—and in reply,
"I speak."—Alas! each new attempt was vain:
Confused he stood, he sate, he rose again;
At length he growl'd defiance, sought the door,
Cursed the whole synod, and was seen no more.

"Laud we," said Justice Bolt, "the Powers above:
"Thus could our speech the sturdiest foe remove."
Exulting now he gain'd new strength of fame,
And lost all feelings of defeat and shame.

"He dared not strive, you witness'd—dared not lift
"His voice, nor drive at his accursed drift:

" So all shall tremble, wretches who oppose
" Our Church or State—thus be it to our foes."

He spoke, and, seated with his former air,
Look'd his full self, and fill'd his ample chair;
Took one full bumper to each favourite cause,
And dwelt all night on politics and laws,
With high applauding voice, that gain'd him high applause. (1)

(1) [This tale is not judiciously placed at the portal to tempt hesitating readers to go forward. The fault, however, is entirely in the subject, which commands no strong or general interest; for it is perfectly well conceived and executed. The object of it is to show, that a man's fluency and force and intrepidity of speech depend very much upon his confidence of the approbation of his auditors; and, accordingly, it exhibits the orthodox, loyal, authoritative Justice Bolt struck quite dumb in an assembly of Jacobins into which he happens to stray; and the Jacobin orator, in like manner, reduced to stammering and imbecility, when detected at a dinner of parsons. The description of Justice Bolt is admirable, and may stand for a portrait of more than one provincial dictator. — JEFFREY.]

TALE II.

THE PARTING HOUR.

——— I did not take my leave of him, but had
Most pretty things to say: ere I could tell him
How I would think of him, at certain hours,
Such thoughts and such; — or ere I could
Give him that parting kiss, which I had set
Betwixt two charming words — comes in my father. — *Cymbeline.*

Grief hath changed me since you saw me last,
And careful hours with Time's deformed hand
Have written strange defeatures o'er my face. — *Comedy of Errors.*

Oh! if thou be the same Egean, speak,
And speak unto the same Emilia. — *Comedy of Errors.*

I ran it through, ev'n from my boyish days
To the very moment that she bad me tell it,
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field;
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery. — *Othello.*

An old man, broken with the storms of fate,
Is come to lay his weary bones among you;
Give him a little earth for charity. — *Henry VIII.*

TALE II.

THE PARTING HOUR. (1)

MINUTELY trace man's life; year after year,
Through all his days let all his deeds appear,
And then, though some may in that life be strange,
Yet there appears no vast nor sudden change:
The links that bind those various deeds are seen,
And no mysterious void is left between.

But let these binding links be all destroy'd,
All that through years he suffer'd or enjoy'd:

(1) [Mr. Crabbe's fourth brother, William, taking to a seafaring life, was made prisoner by the Spaniards: he was carried to Mexico, where he became a silversmith, married, and prospered, until his increasing riches attracted a charge of Protestantism; the consequence of which was much persecution. He at last was obliged to abandon Mexico, his property, and his family; and was discovered, in the year 1803, by an Aldborough sailor, on the coast of Honduras, where again he seems to have found some success in business. This sailor was the only person he had seen for many a year who could tell him any thing of Aldborough and his family; and great was his perplexity when he was informed that his eldest brother, George, was a clergyman. "This cannot be *our* George," said the wanderer—"he was a *doctor!*" This was the first, and it was also the last, tidings that ever reached Mr. Crabbe of his brother William; and, upon the Aldborough sailor's story of his casual interview, it is obvious that he built this tale.—See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 4.]

Let that vast gap be made, and then behold —
This was the youth, and he is thus when old;
Then we at once the work of time survey,
And in an instant see a life's decay;
Pain mix'd with pity in our bosoms rise,
And sorrow takes new sadness from surprise.

Beneath yon tree, observe an ancient pair —
A sleeping man; a woman in her chair,
Watching his looks with kind and pensive air;
Nor wife, nor sister she, nor is the name
Nor kindred of this friendly pair the same;
Yet so allied are they, that few can feel
Her constant, warm, unwearied, anxious zeal;
Their years and woes, although they long have loved
Keep their good name and conduct unreproved;
Thus life's small comforts they together share,
And while life lingers for the grave prepare.

No other subjects on their spirits press,
Nor gain such int'rest as the past distress;
Grievous events, that from the mem'ry drive
Life's common cares, and those alone survive,
Mix with each thought, in every action share,
Darken each dream, and blend with every prayer.

To *David Booth*, his fourth and last-born boy,
Allen his name, was more than common joy;
And as the child grew up, there seem'd in him,
A more than common life in every limb;
A strong and handsome stripling he became,
And the gay spirit answer'd to the frame;

A lighter, happier lad was never seen,
For ever easy, cheerful, or serene;
His early love he fix'd upon a fair
And gentle maid — they were a handsome pair.

They at an infant-school together play'd,
Where the foundation of their love was laid:
The boyish champion would his choice attend
In every sport, in every fray defend.
As prospects open'd, and as life advanced,
They walk'd together, they together danced;
On all occasions, from their early years,
They mix'd their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears;
Each heart was anxious, till it could impart
Its daily feelings to its kindred heart;
As years increased, unnumber'd petty wars
Broke out between them; jealousies and jars;
Causeless indeed, and follow'd by a peace,
That gave to love — growth, vigour, and increase.
Whilst yet a boy, when other minds are void,
Domestic thoughts young Allen's hours employ'd;
Judith in gaining hearts had no concern,
Rather intent the matron's part to learn;
Thus early prudent and sedate they grew,
While lovers, thoughtful — and though children, true.
To either parents not a day appear'd,
When with this love they might have interfered:
Childish at first, they cared not to restrain;
And strong at last, they saw restriction vain;
Nor knew they when that passion to reprove —
Now idle fondness, now resistless love.

So while the waters rise, the children tread
On the broad estuary's sandy bed;
But soon the channel fills, from side to side
Comes danger rolling with the deep'ning tide;
Yet none who saw the rapid current flow
Could the first instant of that danger know.

The lovers waited till the time should come
When they together could possess a home:
In either house were men and maids unwed,
Hopes to be soothed, and tempers to be led.
Then Allen's mother of his favourite maid
Spoke from the feelings of a mind afraid:
"Dress and amusements were her sole employ,"
She said — "entangling her deluded boy;"
And yet, in truth, a mother's jealous love
Had much imagined and could little prove;
Judith had beauty — and if vain, was kind,
Discreet and mild, and had a serious mind.

Dull was their prospect — when the lovers met,
They said, "We must not — dare not venture yet."
"Oh! could I labour for thee," Allen cried,
"Why should our friends be thus dissatisfied?
"On my own arm I could depend, but they
"Still urge obedience — must I yet obey?"
Poor Judith felt the grief, but grieving begg'd delay.

At length a prospect came that seem'd to smile,
And faintly woo them, from a Western Isle;
A kinsman there a widow's hand had gain'd,
"Was old, was rich, and childless yet remain'd;

"Would some young Booth to his affairs attend,
"And wait awhile, he might expect a friend."
The elder brothers, who were not in love,
Fear'd the false seas, unwilling to remove;
But the young Allen, an enamour'd boy,
Eager an independence to enjoy,
Would through all perils seek it, — by the sea, —
Through labour, danger, pain, or slavery.
The faithful Judith his design approved,
For both were sanguine, they were young, and loved.
The mother's slow consent was then obtain'd;
The time arrived, to part alone remain'd:
All things prepared, on the expected day
Was seen the vessel anchor'd in the bay.
From her would seamen in the evening come,
To take th' adventurous Allen from his home;
With his own friends the final day he pass'd,
And every painful hour, except the last.
The grieving father urged the cheerful glass,
To make the moments with less sorrow pass;
Intent the mother look'd upon her son,
And wish'd th' assent withdrawn, the deed undone;
The younger sister, as he took his way,
Hung on his coat, and begg'd for more delay:
But his own Judith call'd him to the shore,
Whom he must meet, for they might meet no more; —
And there he found her — faithful, mournful, true,
Weeping, and waiting for a last adieu!
The ebbing tide had left the sand, and there
Moved with slow steps the melancholy pair:
Sweet were the painful moments — but, how sweet,
And without pain, when they again should meet!

Now either spoke, as hope and fear impress'd,
Each their alternate triumph in the breast.

Distance alarm'd the maid — she cried, "'Tis far!"
And danger too — "it is a time of war:
"Then in those countries are diseases strange,
"And women gay, and men are prone to change:
"What then may happen in a year, when things
"Of vast importance every moment brings!
"But hark! an oar!" she cried, yet none appear'd —
'T was love's mistake, who fancied what it fear'd;
And she continued — "Do, my Allen, keep
"Thy heart from evil, let thy passions sleep;
"Believe it good, nay glorious, to prevail,
"And stand in safety where so many fail;
"And do not, Allen, or for shame, or pride,
"Thy faith abjure, or thy profession hide;
"Can I believe *his* love will lasting prove,
"Who has no rev'rence for the God I love?
"I know thee well! how good thou art and kind;
"But strong the passions that invade thy mind —
"Now, what to me hath Allen to commend?" —
"Upon my mother," said the youth, "attend;
"Forget her spleen, and, in my place appear,
"Her love to me will make my Judith dear,
"Oft I shall think (such comforts lovers seek),
"Who speaks of me, and fancy what they speak;
"Then write on all occasions, always dwell
"On hope's fair prospects, and be kind and well,
"And ever choose the fondest, tenderest style.
She answer'd, "No," but answer'd with a smile.

" And now, my Judith, at so sad a time,
" Forgive my fear, and call it not my crime;
" When with our youthful neighbours 'tis thy chance
" To meet in walks, the visit or the dance,
" When every lad would on my lass attend,
" Choose not a smooth designer for a friend:
" That fawning Philip! — nay, be not severe,
" A rival's hope must cause a lover's fear."

Displeased she felt, and might in her reply
Have mix'd some anger, but the boat was nigh,
Now truly heard! — it soon was full in sight; —
Now the sad farewell, and the long good-night;
For see! — his friends come hast'ning to the beach,
And now the gunwale is within the reach:
" Adieu! — farewell! — remember!" — and what more
Affection taught, was utter'd from the shore.
But Judith left them with a heavy heart,
Took a last view, and went to weep apart.
And now his friends went slowly from the place,
Where she stood still, the dashing oar to trace,
Till all were silent! — for the youth she pray'd,
And softly then return'd the weeping maid.

They parted, thus by hope and fortune led,
And Judith's hours in pensive pleasure fled;
But when return'd the youth? — the youth no more
Return'd exulting to his native shore;
But forty years were past, and then there came
A worn-out man with wither'd limbs and lame,
His mind oppress'd with woes, and bent with age his
frame:

Yes! old and grieved, and trembling with decay,
Was Allen landing in his native bay,
Willing his breathless form should blend with kindred clay.
In an autumnal eve he left the beach,
In such an eve he chanced the port to reach:
He was alone; he press'd the very place
Of the sad parting, of the last embrace: (1)
There stood his parents, there retired the maid,
So fond, so tender, and so much afraid;
And on that spot, through many a year, his mind
Turn'd mournful back, half sinking, half resign'd.

No one was present; of its crew bereft,
A single boat was in the billows left;
Sent from some anchor'd vessel in the bay
At the returning tide to sail away
O'er the black stern the moonlight softly play'd,
The loosen'd foresail flapping in the shade;
All silent else on shore; but from the town
A drowsy peal of distant bells came down:
From the tall houses here and there, a light
Served some confused remembrance to excite:
"There," he observed, and new emotions felt,
"Was my first home—and yonder Judith dwelt;
"Dead! dead are all! I long—I fear to know,"
He said, and walk'd impatient, and yet slow.

(1) [Original MS.:—
In a clear eve the lover sail'd, and one
As clear and bright on aged Allen shone:
On the spot sanction'd by the last embrace
The old man stood! and sigh'd upon the place.]

Sudden there broke upon his grief a noise
Of merry tumult and of vulgar joys:
Seamen returning to their ship, were come,
With idle numbers straying from their home;
Allen among them mix'd, and in the old
Strove some familiar features to behold;
While fancy aided memory:—"Man! what cheer?"
A sailor cried; "Art thou at anchor here?"
Faintly he answer'd, and then tried to trace
Some youthful features in some aged face:
A swarthy matron he beheld, and thought
She might unfold the very truths he sought:
Confused and trembling, he the dame address'd:
"The *Booths!* yet live they?" pausing and oppress'd;
Then spake again:—"Is there no ancient man,
"David his name?—assist me, if you can.—
"Flemmings there were—and Judith, doth she live?"
The woman gazed, nor could an answer give;
Yet wond'ring stood, and all were silent by,
Feeling a strange and solemn sympathy.
The woman musing said—"She knew full well
"Where the old people came at last to dwell;
"They had a married daughter, and a son,
"But they were dead, and now remain'd not one."

"Yes," said an elder, who had paused intent
On days long past, "there was a sad event;—
"One of these Booths—it was my mother's tale—
"Here left his lass, I know not where to sail:

" She saw their parting, and observed the pain;
" But never came th' unhappy man again:"
" The ship was captured"—Allen meekly said,
" And what became of the forsaken maid?"
The woman answer'd: " I remember now,
" She used to tell the lasses of her vow,
" And of her lover's loss, and I have seen
" The gayest hearts grow sad where she has been;
" Yet in her grief she married, and was made
" Slave to a wretch, whom meekly she obey'd,
" And early buried—but I know no more:
" And hark! our friends are hast'ning to the shore."

Allen soon found a lodging in the town,
And walk'd, a man unnoticed up and down.
This house, and this, he knew, and thought a face
He sometimes could among a number trace:
Of names remember'd there remain'd a few,
But of no favourites, and the rest were new: (1)
A merchant's wealth, when Allen went to sea,
Was reckon'd boundless.—Could he living be?
Or lived his son? for one he had, the heir
To a vast business, and a fortune fair.
No! but that heir's poor widow, from her shed,
With crutches went to take her dole of bread·

(1) ["Last summer I went down to my native town, where I found the streets much narrower and shorter than I thought I had left them, inhabited by a new race of people, to whom I was very little known. My playfellows were grown old, and forced me to suspect I was no longer young. My only remaining friend had changed his principles, and was become the tool of the predominant faction. I wandered about for five days, and took the first convenient opportunity of returning to a place where, if there is not much happiness, there is, at least, such a diversity of good and evil, that slight vexations do not fix upon the heart."—DR. JOHNSON.]

There was a friend whom he had left a boy,
With hope to sail the master of a hoy;
Him, after many a stormy day, he found
With his great wish, his life's whole purpose, crown'd.
This hoy's proud captain look'd in Allen's face,—
" Yours is, my friend," said he, " a woful case;
" We cannot all succeed: I now command
" The Betsy sloop, and am not much at land;
" But when we meet, you shall your story tell
" Of foreign parts—I bid you now farewell!"

Allen so long had left his native shore, (1)
He saw but few whom he had seen before;
The older people, as they met him, cast
A pitying look, oft speaking as they pass'd—
" The man is Allen Booth, and it appears
" He dwelt among us in his early years:

(1) [Original MS.:—
Oft to his children had the father told
Where he resided in the years of old;
When, without thought, his feeling and his pride
The native town adorn'd and magnified;
The streets, the markets, and the quays were all
Spacious and grand, and every building tall:
The tower and church were sea-marks leagues from land—
Men were amazed to see them look so grand!
His father's house was then in Allen's eyes,
But far increased in beauty and in size;
And their small area where the schoolboys play'd,
Room for an army had his fancy made:
But now the dark and feeble mind debased,
Contracted, sullied all that fancy graced,
All spaces dwindled — streets but alleys seem'd:
Then dreamt he now, or absent had he dream'd?
The church itself, the lofty tower, the scene
Of so much glory, was debased and mean:
The mind each object in dull clothing dress'd,
And its own sadness on each scene impress'd.]

" We see the name engraved upon the stones,
" Where this poor wanderer means to lay his bones."
Thus where he lived and loved—unhappy change!—
He seems a stranger, and finds all are strange.

But now a Widow, in a village near,
Chanced of the melancholy man to hear;
Old as she was, to Judith's bosom came
Some strong emotions at the well-known name;
He was her much-loved Allen, she had stay'd
Ten troubled years, a sad afflicted maid;
Then was she wedded, of his death assured,
And much of mis'ry in her lot endured;
Her husband died; her children sought their bread
In various places, and to her were dead.
The once fond lovers met; not grief nor age,
Sickness or pain, their hearts could disengage:
Each had immediate confidence; a friend
Both now beheld, on whom they might depend:
" Now is there one to whom I can express
" My nature's weakness, and my soul's distress."
Allen look'd up, and with impatient heart—
" Let me not lose thee—never let us part:
" So Heaven this comfort to my sufferings give,
" It is not all distress to think and live."
Thus Allen spoke—for time had not removed
The charms attach'd to one so fondly loved;
Who with more health, the mistress of their cot,
Labours to soothe the evils of his lot.
To her, to her alone, his various fate,
At various times, 'tis comfort to relate;

And yet his sorrow—she too loves to hear
What wrings her bosom, and compels the tear

First he related how he left the shore,
Alarm'd with fears that they should meet no more.
Then, ere the ship had reach'd her purposed course,
They met and yielded to the Spanish force;
Then 'cross th' Atlantic seas they bore their prey,
Who grieving landed from their sultry bay;
And marching many a burning league, he found
Himself a slave upon a miner's ground:
There a good priest his native language spoke,
And gave some ease to his tormenting yoke;
Kindly advanced him in his master's grace,
And he was station'd in an easier place:
There, hopeless ever to escape the land,
He to a Spanish maiden gave his hand;
In cottage shelter'd from the blaze of day,
He saw his happy infants round him play;
Where summer shadows, made by lofty trees,
Waved o'er his seat, and soothed his reveries;
E'en then he thought of England, nor could sigh,
But his fond Isabel demanded, "Why?"
Grieved by the story, she the sigh repaid,
And wept in pity for the English maid:
Thus twenty years were pass'd, and pass'd his views,
Of further bliss, for he had wealth to lose:
His friend now dead, some foe had dared to paint
"His faith as tainted: he his spouse would taint;
"Make all his children infidels, and found
"An English heresy on Christian ground."

" Whilst I was poor," said Allen, " none would care
" What my poor notions of religion were;
" None ask'd me whom I worshipp'd, how I pray'd,
" If due obedience to the laws were paid:
" My good adviser taught me to be still,
" Nor to make converts had I power or will.
" I preach'd no foreign doctrine to my wife,
" And never mention'd Luther in my life;
" I, all they said, say what they would, allow'd,
" And when the fathers bade me bow, I bow'd;
" Their forms I follow'd, whether well or sick,.
" And was a most obedient Catholic.
" But I had money, and these pastors found
" My notions vague, heretical, unsound:
" A wicked book they seized; the very Turk
" Could not have read a more pernicious work;
" To me pernicious, who if it were good
" Or evil question'd not, nor understood:
" Oh! had I little but the book possess'd,
" I might have read it, and enjoy'd my rest."

Alas! poor Allen—through his wealth was seen
Crimes that by poverty conceal'd had been:
Faults that in dusty pictures rest unknown
Are in an instant through the varnish shown.

He told their cruel mercy; how at last,
In Christian kindness for the merits past,
They spared his forfeit life, but bade him fly,
Or for his crime and contumacy die;

Fly from all scenes, all objects of delight:
His wife, his children, weeping in his sight,
All urging him to flee, he fled, and cursed his flight.

He next related how he found a way,
Guideless and grieving, to Campeachy-Bay:
There in the woods he wrought, and there, among
Some lab'ring seamen, heard his native tongue:
The sound, one moment, broke upon his pain
With joyful force; he long'd to hear again:
Again he heard; he seized an offer'd hand,
"And when beheld you last our native land!"
He cried, "and in what country? quickly say"—
The seamen answer'd—strangers all were they;
One only at his native port had been;
He, landing once, the quay and church had seen.
For that esteem'd; but nothing more he knew.
Still more to know, would Allen join the crew,
Sail where they sail'd, and, many a peril past,
They at his kinsman's isle their anchor cast;
But him they found not, nor could one relate
Aught of his will, his wish, or his estate.
This grieved not Allen; then again he sail'd
For England's coast, again his fate prevail'd:
War raged, and he, an active man and strong,
Was soon impress'd, and served his country long.
By various shores he pass'd, on various seas,
Never so happy as when void of ease.—
And then he told how in a calm distress'd,
Day after day his soul was sick of rest;
When, as a log upon the deep they stood,
Then roved his spirit to the inland wood;

Till, while awake, he dream'd, that on the seas
Were his loved home, the hill, the stream, the trees:
He gazed, he pointed to the scenes:—"There stand
"My wife, my children, 'tis my lovely land;'
"See! there my dwelling — oh! delicious scene
"Of my best life — unhand me — are ye men?"
And thus the frenzy ruled him, till the wind
Brush'd the fond pictures from the stagnant mind.

He told of bloody fights, and how at length
The rage of battle gave his spirits strength:
'T was in the Indian seas his limb he lost,
And he was left half-dead upon the coast;
But living gain'd, 'mid rich aspiring men,
A fair subsistence by his ready pen.
"Thus," he continued, "pass'd unvaried years,
"Without events producing hopes or fears."
Augmented pay procured him decent wealth,
But years advancing undermined his health;
Then oft-times in delightful dream he flew
To England's shore, and scenes his childhood knew:
He saw his parents, saw his fav'rite maid,
No feature wrinkled, not a charm decay'd;
And thus excited, in his bosom rose
A wish so strong, it baffled his repose;
Anxious he felt on English earth to lie;
To view his native soil, and there to die.
He then described the gloom, the dread he found,
When first he landed on the chosen ground,
Where undefined was all he hoped and fear'd,
And how confused and troubled all appear'd;
His thoughts in past and present scenes employ'd,
All views in future blighted and destroy'd;

His were a medley of bewild'ring themes,
Sad as realities, and wild as dreams.

Here his relation closes, but his mind
Flies back again some resting-place to find;
Thus silent, musing through the day, he sees
His children sporting by those lofty trees,
Their mother singing in the shady scene,
Where the fresh springs burst o'er the lively green;—
So strong his eager fancy, he affrights
The faithful widow by its powerful flights;
For what disturbs him he aloud will tell,
And cry — "'Tis she, my wife! my Isabel!
"Where are my children?"—Judith grieves to hear
How the soul works in sorrows so severe;
Assiduous all his wishes to attend,
Deprived of much, he yet may boast a friend;
Watch'd by her care, in sleep, his spirit takes
Its flight; and watchful finds her when he wakes.

'Tis now her office; her attention see!
While her friend sleeps beneath that shading tree,
Careful, she guards him from the glowing heat,
And pensive muses at her Allen's feet.

And where is he? Ah! doubtless in those scenes
Of his best days, amid the vivid greens,
Fresh with unnumber'd rills, where ev'ry gale
Breathes the rich fragrance of the neighb'ring vale,
Smiles not his wife, and listens as there comes
The night-bird's music from the thick'ning glooms?

And as he sits with all these treasures nigh,
Blaze not with fairy-light the phosphor-fly,
When like a sparkling gem it wheels illumined by?
This is the joy that now so plainly speaks
In the warm transient flushing of his cheeks;
For he is list'ning to the fancied noise
Of his own children, eager in their joys:
All this he feels, a dream's delusive bliss
Gives the expression, and the glow like this.
And now his Judith lays her knitting by,
These strong emotions in her friend to spy;
For she can fully of their nature deem——
But see! he breaks the long-protracted theme,
And wakes, and cries — "My God! 'twas but a dream."(1)

(1) [This tale contains passages of great beauty and pathos. The story is simply that of a youth and a maiden in humble life, who had loved each other from their childhood, but were too poor to marry. The youth goes to the West Indies to push his fortune; but is captured by the Spaniards and carried to Mexico, where, in the course of time, though still sighing for his first love, he marries a Spanish girl, and lives twenty years with her and his children. He is then impressed, and carried round the world for twenty years longer, and is at last moved by an irresistible impulse, when old, and shattered, and lonely, to seek his native town, and the scene of his youthful vows. He comes and finds his Judith, like himself, in a state of widowhood; but still brooding, like himself, over the memory of their early love. She had waited ten anxious years without tidings of him, and then married: and now, when all passion and fuel for passion is extinguished within them, the memory of their young attachment endears them to each other, and they still cling together, in sad and subdued affection, to the exclusion of all the rest of the world. The history of the growth and maturity of their earliest love is beautifully given. The sad and long-delayed return of the adventurer is described in a tone of genuine pathos, and in some places with such truth and force of colouring, as to outdo the efforts of the first dramatic representation. There is something sweet and touching, and in a high vein of poetry, in the story which Allen tells to Judith of all his adventures, and of those other ties, of which it still wrings her bosom to hear him speak. The close is extremely beautiful, and leaves upon the mind that impression of sadness which is both salutary and delightful, because it is akin to pity, and mingled with admiration and esteem. — JEFFREY.]

TALE III.

THE GENTLEMAN FARMER.

—— Pause then,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou beest rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough. — *Merchant of Venice.*

Because I will not do them wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is (for which I may go the finer), I will live a bachelor. —*Much Ado about Nothing.*

Throw physic to the dogs, I 'll none of it. — *Macbeth.*

His promises are, as he then was, mighty;
And his performance, as he now is, nothing. — *Henry VIII.*

Two are the species in this genus known;
One, who is rich in his profession grown,
Who yearly finds his ample stores increase,
From fortune's favours and a favouring lease;
Who rides his hunter, who his house adorns;
Who drinks his wine, and his disbursements scorns;
Who freely lives, and loves to show he can —
This is the Farmer made the Gentleman.

The second species from the world is sent,
Tired with its strife, or with his wealth content;
In books and men beyond the former read,
To farming solely by a passion led,
Or by a fashion; curious in his land;
Now planning much, now changing what he plann'd;
Pleased by each trial, not by failures vex'd,
And ever certain to succeed the next;
Quick to resolve, and easy to persuade —
This is the Gentleman, a Farmer made.

Gwyn was of these; he from the world withdrew
Early in life, his reasons known to few;
Some disappointment said, some pure good sense,
The love of land, the press of indolence;
His fortune known, and coming to retire,
If not a Farmer, men had call'd him 'Squire.

Forty and five his years, no child or wife
Cross'd the still tenour of his chosen life;
Much land he purchased, planted far around,
And let some portions of superfluous ground

To farmers near him, not displeased to say,
" My tenants," nor " our worthy landlord," they.

Fix'd in his farm, he soon display'd his skill
In small-boned lambs, the horse-hoe, and the drill;
From these he rose to themes of nobler kind,
And show'd the riches of a fertile mind;
To all around their visits he repaid,
And thus his mansion and himself display'd.
His rooms were stately, rather fine than neat,
And guests politely call'd his house a Seat;
At much expense was each apartment graced,
His taste was gorgeous, but it still was taste;
In full festoons the crimson curtains fell,
The sofas rose in bold elastic swell;
Mirrors in gilded frames display'd the tints
Of glowing carpets and of colour'd prints;
The weary eye saw every object shine,
And all was costly, fanciful, and fine.

As with his friends he pass'd the social hours,
His generous spirit scorn'd to hide its powers;
Powers unexpected, for his eye and air
Gave no sure signs that eloquence was there;
Oft he began with sudden fire and force,
As loth to lose occasion for discourse;
Some, 'tis observed, who feel a wish to speak,
Will a due place for introduction seek;
On to their purpose step by step they steal,
And all their way, by certain signals, feel;
Others plunge in at once, and never heed
Whose turn they take, whose purpose they impede;

Resolved to shine, they hasten to begin,
Of ending thoughtless—and of these was Gwyn.
And thus he spake:—

"It grieves me to the soul,
" To see how man submits to man's control;
" How overpower'd and shackled minds are led
" In vulgar tracks, and to submission bred;
" The coward never on himself relies,
" But to an equal for assistance flies;
" Man yields to custom, as he bows to fate,
" In all things ruled — mind, body, and estate;
" In pain, in sickness, we for cure apply
" To them we know not, and we know not why;
" But that the creature has some jargon read,
" And got some Scotchman's system in his head;
" Some grave impostor, who will health insure,
" Long as your patience or your wealth endure,
" But mark them well, the pale and sickly crew,
" They have not health, and can they give it you?
" These solemn cheats their various methods choose;
" A system fires them, as a bard his muse:
" Hence wordy wars arise: the learn'd divide,
" And groaning patients curse each erring guide.

" Next, our affairs are govern'd, buy or sell,
" Upon the deed the law must fix its spell;
" Whether we hire or let, we must have still
" The dubious aid of an attorney's skill;
" They take a part in every man's affairs,
" And in all business some concern is theirs;
" Because mankind in ways prescribed are found
" Like flocks that follow on a beaten ground,

" Each abject nature in the way proceeds,
" That now to shearing, now to slaughter leads. (1)
" Should you offend, though meaning no offence,
" You have no safety in your innocence;
" The statute broken then is placed in view,
" And men must pay for crimes they never knew,
" Who would by law regain his plunder'd store,
" Would pick up fallen merc'ry from the floor;
" If he pursue it, here and there it slides,
" He would collect it, but it more divides;
" This part and this he stops, but still in vain,
" It slips aside, and breaks in parts again;
" Till, after time and pains, and care and cost,
" He finds his labour and his object lost.
" But most it grieves me (friends alone are round)
" To see a man in priestly fetters bound;
" Guides to the soul, these friends of Heaven contrive,
" Long as man lives, to keep his fears alive:
" Soon as an infant breathes, their rites begin;
" Who knows not sinning, must be freed from sin;
" Who needs no bond, must yet engage in vows;
" Who has no judgment, must a creed espouse:
" Advanced in life, our boys are bound by rules,
" Are catechised in churches, cloisters, schools,
" And train'd in thraldrom to be fit for tools:
" The youth grown up, he now a partner needs,
" And lo! a priest, as soon as he succeeds.

(1) [Original MS.: —
Because in beaten ways we ever tread,
And man by man, as sheep by sheep, is led,
None start aside, but in the paths proceed, &c.]

" What man of sense can marriage-rites approve?
" What man of spirit can be bound to love?
" Forced to be kind! compell'd to be sincere!
" Do chains and fetters make companions dear?
" Pris'ners indeed we bind; but though the bond
" May keep them safe, it does not make them fond:
" The ring, the vow, the witness, licence, prayers,
" All parties known! made public all affairs!
" Such forms men suffer, and from these they date
" A deed of love begun with all they hate:
" Absurd! that none the beaten road should shun,
" But love to do what other dupes have done.

" Well, now your priest has made you one of twain,
" Look you for rest? Alas! you look in vain.
" If sick, he comes; you cannot die in peace,
" Till he attends to witness your release;
" To vex your soul, and urge you to confess
" The sins you feel, remember, or can guess;
" Nay, when departed, to your grave he goes,
" But there indeed he hurts not your repose.

" Such are our burthens; part we must sustain,
" But need not link new grievance to the chain:
" Yet men like idiots will their frames surround
" With these vile shackles, nor confess they're bound;
" In all that most confines them they confide,
" Their slavery boast, and make their bonds their pride;
" E'en as the pressure galls them, they declare,
" (Good souls!) how happy and how free they are!

" As madmen, pointing round their wretched cells,
" Cry, ' Lo ! the palace where our honour dwells.'

" Such is our state : but I resolve to live
" By rules my reason and my feelings give ;
" No legal guards shall keep enthrall'd my mind,
" No slaves command me, and no teachers blind.
" Tempted by sins, let me their strength defy,
" But have no second in a surplice by ;
" No bottle-holder, with officious aid,
" To comfort conscience, weaken'd and afraid :
" Then if I yield, my frailty is not known ;
" And, if I stand, the glory is my own.

" When Truth and Reason are our friends, we seem
" Alive ! awake ! —the superstitious dream.
" Oh ! then, fair Truth, for thee alone I seek,
" Friend to the wise, supporter of the weak ;
" From thee we learn whate'er is right and just ;
" Forms to despise, professions to distrust ;
" Creeds to reject, pretensions to deride,
" And, following thee, to follow none beside."

Such was the speech : it struck upon the ear
Like sudden thunder, none expect to hear.
He saw men's wonder with a manly pride,
And gravely smiled at guest electrified ;
" A farmer this !" they said, " Oh ! let him seek
" That place where he may for his country speak ;
" On some great question to harangue for hours,
" While speakers, hearing, envy nobler powers !"

Wisdom like this, as all things rich and rare,
Must be acquired with pains, and kept with care;
In books he sought it, which his friends might view,
When their kind host the guarding curtain drew.
There were historic works for graver hours,
And lighter verse, to spur the languid powers;
There metaphysics, logic there had place;
But of devotion not a single trace —
Save what is taught in Gibbon's florid page,
And other guides of this inquiring age;
There Hume appear'd, and near, a splendid book
Composed by Gay's "good lord of Bolingbroke:" (1)
With these were mix'd the light, the free, the vain,
And from a corner peep'd the sage Tom Paine:
Here four neat volumes Chesterfield were named,
For manners much and easy morals famed;
With chaste Memoirs of females, to be read
When deeper studies had confused the head.

Such his resources, treasures where he sought
For daily knowledge till his mind was fraught:
Then, when his friends were present, for their use
He would the riches he had stored produce;
He found his lamp burn clearer, when each day,
He drew for all he purposed to display:

(1) ["Lo I, who erst beneath a tree
Sang Bumkinet and Bowzybee,
And Blouzelind, and Marian bright,
In apron blue, or apron white,
Now write my sonnets in a book,
For my good lord of Bolingbroke."
GAY, *Prologue to Shepherd's Week.*]

For these occasions, forth his knowledge sprung,
As mustard quickens on a bed of dung:
All was prepared, and guests allow'd the praise
For what they saw he could so quickly raise.

Such this new friend; and when the year came round,
The same impressive, reasoning sage was found:
Then, too, was seen the pleasant mansion graced
With a fair damsel — his no vulgar taste;
The neat *Rebecca* — sly, observant, still,
Watching his eye, and waiting on his will;
Simple yet smart her dress, her manners meek,
Her smiles spoke for her, she would seldom speak:
But watch'd each look, each meaning to detect,
And (pleased with notice) felt for all neglect.

With her lived Gwyn a sweet harmonious life,
Who, forms excepted, was a charming wife:
The wives indeed, so made by vulgar law,
Affected scorn, and censured what they saw,
And what they saw not, fancied; said 't was sin,
And took no notice of the wife of Gwyn:
But he despised their rudeness, and would prove
Theirs was compulsion and distrust, not love;
"Fools as they were! could they conceive that rings
"And parsons' blessings were substantial things?"
They answer'd "Yes;" while he contemptuous spoke
Of the low notions held by simple folk;
Yet, strange that anger in a man so wise
Should from the notions of these fools arise;
Can they so vex us, whom we so despise?

Brave as he was, our hero felt a dread
Lest those who saw him kind should think him led;
If to his bosom fear a visit paid,
It was, lest he should be supposed afraid:
Hence sprang his orders; not that he desired
The things when done: obedience he required;
And thus, to prove his absolute command,
Ruled every heart, and moved each subject hand,
Assent he ask'd for every word and whim,
To prove that *he alone was king of him.*

The still Rebecca, who her station knew,
With ease resign'd the honours not her due;
Well pleased she saw that men her board would grace,
And wish'd not there to see a female face;
When by her lover she his spouse was styled,
Polite she thought it, and demurely smiled;
But when he wanted wives and maidens round
So to regard her, she grew grave and frown'd;
And sometimes whisper'd—"Why should you respect
"These people's notions, yet their forms reject?"

Gwyn, though from marriage bond and fetter free,
Still felt abridgment in his liberty;
Something of hesitation he betray'd,
And in her presence thought of what he said.
Thus fair Rebecca, though she walk'd astray,
His creed rejecting, judged it right to pray,
To be at church, to sit with serious looks,
To read her Bible and her Sunday-books:
She hated all those new and daring themes,
And call'd his free conjectures "devil's dreams:"

She honour'd still the priesthood in her fall,
And claim'd respect and reverence for them all;
Call'd them " of sin's destructive power the foes,
" And not such blockheads as he might suppose."
Gwyn to his friends would smile, and sometimes say,
" 'T is a kind fool, why vex her in her way?"
Her way she took, and still had more in view,
For she contrived that he should take it too.
The daring freedom of his soul, 't was plain,
In part was lost in a divided reign;
A king and queen, who yet in prudence sway'd
Their peaceful state, and were in turn obey'd.

Yet such our fate, that, when we plan the best,
Something arises to disturb our rest:
For though in spirits high, in body strong,
Gwyn something felt—he knew not what—was wrong;
He wish'd to know, for he believed the thing,
If unremoved, would other evil bring:
" She must perceive, of late he could not eat,
" And when he walk'd he trembled on his feet:
" He had forebodings, and he seem'd as one
" Stopp'd on the road, or threaten'd by a dun;
" He could not live, and yet, should he apply
" To those physicians—he must sooner die."

The mild Rebecca heard with some disdain,
And some distress, her friend and lord complain:
His death she fear'd not, but had painful doubt
What his distemper'd nerves might bring about;

With power like hers she dreaded an ally,
And yet there was a person in her eye;—
She thought, debated, fix'd—"Alas!" she said,
"A case like yours must be no more delay'd;
"You hate these doctors: well! but were a friend
"And doctor one, your fears would have an end:
"My cousin *Mollet*—Scotland holds him now—
"Is above all men skilful, all allow;
"Of late a Doctor, and within a while
"He means to settle in this favour'd isle;
"Should he attend you, with his skill profound,
"You must be safe, and shortly would be sound."

When men in health against Physicians rail,
They should consider that their nerves may fail;
Who calls a Lawyer rogue, may find, too late,
On one of these depends his whole estate:
Nay, when the world can nothing more produce,
The Priest, th' insulted priest, may have his use;
Ease, health, and comfort lift a man so high,
These powers are dwarfs that he can scarcely spy;
Pain, sickness, languor, keep a man so low,
That these neglected dwarfs to giants grow:
Happy is he who through the medium sees
Of clear good sense—but Gwyn was not of these.

He heard and he rejoiced: "Ah! let him come,
"And, till he fixes, make my house his home."
Home came the Doctor—he was much admired;
He told the patient what his case required;
His hours for sleep, his time to eat and drink,
When he should ride, read, rest, compose, or think.

Thus join'd peculiar skill and art profound,
To make the fancy-sick no more than fancy-sound.

With such attention, who could long be ill?
Returning health proclaim'd the Doctor's skill.
Presents and praises from a grateful heart
Were freely offer'd on the patient's part;
In high repute the Doctor seem'd to stand,
But still had got no footing in the land;
And, as he saw the seat was rich and fair,
He felt disposed to fix his station there:
To gain his purpose he perform'd the part
Of a good actor, and prepared to start;
Not like a traveller in a day serene, [clean;
When the sun shone and when the roads were
Not like the pilgrim, when the morning grey,
The ruddy eve succeeding, sends his way;
But in a season when the sharp east wind
Had all its influence on a nervous mind;
When past the parlour's front it fiercely blew,
And Gwyn sat pitying every bird that flew,
This strange physician said—"Adieu! adieu!
"Farewell!—Heaven bless you!—if you should—
but no,
"You need not fear—farewell! 't is time to go."

The Doctor spoke; and as the patient heard,
His old disorders (dreadful train!) appear'd;
"He felt the tingling tremor, and the stress
"Upon his nerves that he could not express;
"Should his good friend forsake him, he perhaps
"Might meet his death, and surely a relapse."

So, as the Doctor seem'd intent to part,
He cried in terror—"Oh! be where thou art:
"Come, thou art young, and unengaged; oh! come,
"Make me thy friend, give comfort to mine nome;
"I have now symptoms that require thine aid,
"Do, Doctor stay"—th' obliging Doctor stay'd.

Thus Gwyn was happy; he had now a friend,
And a meek spouse on whom he could depend:
But now possess'd of male and female guide,
Divided power he thus must subdivide:
In earlier days he rode, or sat at ease
Reclined, and having but himself to please;
Now if he would a fav'rite nag bestride,
He sought permission—"Doctor, may I ride?"
(Rebecca's eye her sovereign pleasure told)—
"I think you may, but guarded from the cold.
"Ride forty minutes."—Free and happy soul
He scorn'd submission, and a man's control;
But where such friends in every care unite
All for his good, obedience is delight.

Now Gwyn a sultan bade affairs adieu,
Led and assisted by the faithful two:
The favourite fair, Rebecca, near him sat,
And whisper'd whom to love, assist, or hate:
While the chief vizier eased his lord of cares,
And bore himself the burden of affairs:
No dangers could from such alliance flow,
But from that law, that changes all below

When wintry winds with leaves bestrew'd the ground,
And men were coughing all the village round;
When public papers of invasion told,
Diseases, famines, perils new and old;
When philosophic writers fail'd to clear
The mind of gloom, and lighter works to cheer;
Then came fresh terrors on our hero's mind—
Fears unforeseen, and feelings undefined.

"In outward ills," he cried, "I rest assured
"Of my friend's aid; they will in time be cured;
"But can his art subdue, resist, control
"These inward griefs and troubles of the soul?
"Oh! my Rebecca! my disorder'd mind
"No help in study, none in thought can find;
"What must I do, Rebecca?" She proposed
The Parish-guide; but what could be disclosed
To a proud priest?—"No! him have I defied,
"Insulted, slighted—shall he be my guide?
"But one there is, and if report be just,
"A wise good man, whom I may safely trust;
"Who goes from house to house, from ear to ear,
"To make his truths, his Gospel-truths, appear;
"True if indeed they be, 'tis time that I should hear:
"Send for that man; and if report be just,
"I, like Cornelius, will the teacher trust;
"But if deceiver, I the vile deceit
"Shall soon discover, and discharge the cheat."

To Doctor Mollet was the grief confess'd,
While Gwyn the freedom of his mind express'd;

Yet own'd it was to ills and errors prone,
And he for guilt and frailty must atone.
" My books, perhaps," the wav'ring mortal cried,
" Like men deceive; I would be satisfied; —
" And to my soul the pious man may bring
" Comfort and light — do let me try the thing."

The cousins met, what pass'd with Gwyn was told:
" Alas!" the Doctor said, " how hard to hold
" These easy minds, where all impressions made
" At first sink deeply, and then quickly fade;
" For while so strong these new-born fancies reign,
" We must divert them, to oppose is vain:
" You see him valiant now, he scorns to heed
" The bigot's threat'nings or the zealot's creed;
" Shook by a dream, he next for truth receives
" What frenzy teaches, and what fear believes;
" And this will place him in the power of one
" Whom we must seek, because we cannot shun."

Wisp had been ostler at a busy inn,
Where he beheld and grew in dread of sin;
Then to a Baptists' meeting found his way,
Became a convert, and was taught to pray;
Then preach'd; and, being earnest and sincere,
Brought other sinners to religious fear:
Together grew his influence and his fame,
Till our dejected hero heard his name:
His little failings were a grain of pride,
Raised by the numbers he presumed to guide:
A love of presents, and of lofty praise
For his meek spirit and his humble ways;

But though this spirit would on flattery feed,
No praise could blind him and no arts mislead:—
To him the Doctor made the wishes known
Of his good patron, but conceal'd his own;
He of all teachers had distrust and doubt,
And was reserved in what he came about;
Though on a plain and simple message sent,
He had a secret and a bold intent:
Their minds at first were deeply veil'd; disguise
Form'd the slow speech, and oped the eager eyes;
Till by degrees sufficient light was thrown
On every view, and all the business shown.
Wisp, as a skilful guide who led the blind,
Had powers to rule and awe the vapourish mind;
But not the changeful will, the wavering fear to bind:
And should his conscience give him leave to dwell
With Gwyn, and every rival power expel
(A dubious point), yet he, with every care,
Might soon the lot of the rejected share;
And other Wisps be found like him to reign,
And then be thrown upon the world again:
He thought it prudent then, and felt it just,
The present guides of his new friend to trust:
True, he conceived, to touch the harder heart
Of the cool Doctor, was beyond his art;
But mild Rebecca he could surely sway,
While Gwyn would follow where she led the way:
So to do good, (and why a duty shun,
Because rewarded for the good when done?)
He with his friends would join in all they plann'd,
Save when his faith or feelings should withstand;

There he must rest sole judge of his affairs,
While they might rule exclusively in theirs.

When Gwyn his message to the teacher sent,
He fear'd his friends would show their discontent;
And prudent seem'd it to th' attendant pair,
Not all at once to show an aspect fair:
On Wisp they seem'd to look with jealous eye,
And fair Rebecca was demure and shy;
But by degrees the teacher's worth they knew,
And were so kind, they seem'd converted too.

Wisp took occasion to the nymph to say,
"You must be married: will you name the day?"
She smiled,—"'T is well; but should he not comply
"Is it quite safe th' experiment to try?"—
"My child," the teacher said, "who feels remorse,
"(And feels not he?) must wish relief of course:
"And can he find it, while he fears the crime?—
"You must be married; will you name the time?"

Glad was the patron as a man could be,
Yet marvell'd too, to find his guides agree;
"But what the cause?" he cried; "'t is genuine love
for me."

Each found his part, and let one act describe
The powers and honours of th' accordant tribe:—
A man for favour to the mansion speeds,
And cons his threefold task as he proceeds;
To teacher Wisp he bows with humble air,
And begs his interest for a barn's repair:

Then for the Doctor he enquires, who loves
To hear applause for what his skill improves,
And gives for praise, assent — and to the Fair
He brings of pullets a delicious pair;
Thus sees a peasant, with discernment nice,
A love of power, conceit, and avarice.

Lo! now the change complete: the convert Gwyn
Has sold his books, and has renounced his sin;
Mollet his body orders, Wisp his soul,
And o'er his purse the Lady takes control;
No friends beside he needs, and none attend —
Soul, body, and estate, has each a friend;
And fair Rebecca leads a virtuous life —
She rules a mistress, and she reigns a wife.

(1) [This tale is of a coarser texture than the preceding ones, though full of acute observation and graphic delineation of ordinary characters. The hero is not a farmer turned gentleman, but a gentleman turned farmer — a conceited, active, talking, domineering sort of person — who plants and eats and drinks with great vigour — keeps a mistress, and speaks with audacious scorn of the tyranny of wives, and the impositions of priests, lawyers, and physicians. Being but a shallow fellow, however, at bottom, his confidence in his opinions declines gradually as his health decays; and being seized with some maladies in his stomach, he ends with marrying his mistress, and submitting to be triply governed by three of her confederates, in the respective characters of a quack doctor, a methodist preacher, and a projecting land steward. — JEFFREY.]

TALE IV.

PROCRASTINATION.

——— Heaven witness
I have been to you ever true and humble. — *Henry VIII.*

———

——— Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you all the wealth I had. — *Merchant of Venice.*

———

——— The fatal time
Cuts off all ceremonies and vows of love,
And ample interchange of sweet discourse,
Which so long sunder'd friends should dwell upon.
Richard III.

———

I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers. — *Henry IV.*

———

——— Farewell,
Thou pure impiety, thou impious purity,
For thee I 'll lock up all the gates of love.
Much Ado about Nothing.

TALE IV.

PROCRASTINATION. (1)

Love will expire—the gay, the happy dream
Will turn to scorn, indifference, or esteem:
Some favour'd pairs, in this exchange, are blest,
Nor sigh for raptures in a state of rest;
Others, ill match'd, with minds unpair'd, repent
At once the deed, and know no more content;
From joy to anguish they, in haste, decline,
And, with their fondness, their esteem resign;
More luckless still their fate, who are the prey
Of long-protracted hope and dull delay:
'Mid plans of bliss the heavy hours pass on,
Till love is wither'd, and till joy is gone.

This gentle flame two youthful hearts possess'd,
The sweet disturber of unenvied rest:
The prudent *Dinah* was the maid beloved,
And the kind *Rupert* was the swain approved:

(1) [Mr. Crabbe's sons have no doubt but that their mother's residence, at one time, with her rich old aunt, who was very partial to her, and abounded in trinkets, suggested this supposition.]

A wealthy Aunt her gentle niece sustain'd,
He, with a father, at his desk remain'd,
The youthful couple, to their vows sincere,
Thus loved expectant; year succeeding year,
With pleasant views and hopes, but not a prospect near.
Rupert some comfort in his station saw,
But the poor virgin lived in dread and awe;
Upon her anxious looks the widow smiled,
And bade her wait, "for she was yet a child."
She for her neighbour had a due respect,
Nor would his son encourage or reject;
And thus the pair, with expectations vain,
Beheld the seasons change and change again:
Meantime the nymph her tender tales perused,
Where cruel aunts impatient girls refused:
While hers, though teasing, boasted to be kind,
And she, resenting, to be all resign'd.

The dame was sick, and when the youth applied
For her consent, she groan'd, and cough'd and cried,
Talk'd of departing, and again her breath
Drew hard, and cough'd, and talk'd again of death:
"Here you may live, my Dinah! here the boy
"And you together my estate enjoy:"
Thus to the lovers was her mind express'd,
Till they forbore to urge the fond request.

Servant, and nurse, and comforter, and friend,
Dinah had still some duty to attend;
But yet their walk, when Rupert's evening call
Obtain'd an hour, made sweet amends for all;

So long they now each other's thoughts had known,
That nothing seem'd exclusively their own:
But with the common wish, the mutual fear,
They now had travell'd to their thirtieth year.

At length a prospect open'd — but alas!
Long time must yet, before the union, pass:
Rupert was call'd, in other clime, t' increase
Another's wealth, and toil for future peace.
Loth were the lovers; but the aunt declared
'Twas fortune's call, and they must be prepared:
"You now are young, and for this brief delay,
"And Dinah's care, what I bequeath will pay
"All will be yours; nay, love, suppress that sigh;
"The kind must suffer, and the best must die:"
Then came the cough, and strong the signs it gave
Of holding long contention with the grave.

The lovers parted with a gloomy view,
And little comfort, but that both were true;
He for uncertain duties doom'd to steer,
While hers remain'd too certain and severe.

Letters arrived, and Rupert fairly told
"His cares were many, and his hopes were cold:
"The view more clouded, that was never fair,
"And love alone preserved him from despair:"
In other letters brighter hopes he drew,
"His friends were kind, and he believed them true."

When the sage widow Dinah's grief descried,
She wonder'd much why one so happy sigh'd:

Then bade her see how her poor aunt sustain'd
The ills of life, nor murmur'd nor complain'd.
To vary pleasures, from the lady's chest
Were drawn the pearly string and tabby vest;
Beads, jewels, laces, all their value shown,
With the kind notice — "They will be your own."

This hope, these comforts, cherish'd day by day,
To Dinah's bosom made a gradual way;
Till love of treasure had as large a part,
As love of Rupert, in the virgin's heart.
Whether it be that tender passions fail,
From their own nature, while the strong prevail:
Or whether av'rice, like the poison-tree, (1)
Kills all beside it, and alone will be; (2)

(1) Allusion is here made, not to the well-known species of *sumach*, called the poison-oak, *toxicodendron*, but to the *upas*, or poison-tree of Java: whether it be real or imaginary, this is no proper place for enquiry.

(2) ["Fierce in dread silence on the blasted heath
Fell Upas sits, the Hydra tree of death.
Lo from one root, the envenom'd soil below,
A thousand vegetative serpents grow;
In shining rays the scaly monster spreads
O'er ten square leagues his far diverging heads,
Or in one trunk entwists his tangled form,
Looks o'er the clouds, and hisses in the storm," &c.
DARWIN'S *Loves of the Plants.*

For an authentic refutation of the gross imposition practised on the people of Europe, by the romance of Foersch, on the subject of this tree, see Raffles's *History of Java*, vol. i. p. 44. "Almost every one," says Sir Thomas, "has heard of its fabulous history — a history which, from its extravagant nature, its susceptibility of poetical ornament, its alliance with the cruelties of a despotic government, and the sparkling genius of Darwin, whose purpose it answered to adopt and personify it as a malignant spirit, has obtained almost equal currency with the wonders of the Lerna hydra, the Chimera, or any other of the classic fictions of antiquity."]

Whatever cause prevail'd, the pleasure grew
In Dinah's soul, — she loved the hoards to view;
With lively joy those comforts she survey'd,
And love grew languid in the careful maid.

Now the grave niece partook the widow's cares,
Look'd to the great, and ruled the small affairs:
Saw clean'd the plate, arranged the china-show,
And felt her passion for a shilling grow:
Th' indulgent aunt increased the maid's delight,
By placing tokens of her wealth in sight;
She loved the value of her bonds to tell,
And spake of stocks, and how they rose and fell.

This passion grew, and gain'd at length such sway,
That other passions shrank to make it way;
Romantic notions now the heart forsook,
She read but seldom, and she changed her book;
And for the verses she was wont to send,
Short was her prose, and she was Rupert's friend.
Seldom she wrote, and then the widow's cough,
And constant call, excused her breaking off;
Who, now oppress'd, no longer took the air,
But sate and dozed upon an easy chair.
The cautious doctor saw the case was clear,
But judged it best to have companions near;
They came, they reason'd, they prescribed, — at last,
Like honest men, they said their hopes were past;
Then came a priest — 't is comfort to reflect,
When all is over, there was no neglect:

And all was over — By her husband's bones,
The widow rests beneath the sculptured stones,
That yet record their fondness and their fame,
While all they left, the virgin's care became:
Stock, bonds, and buildings;—it disturb'd her rest,
To think what load of troubles she possess'd:
Yet, if a trouble, she resolved to take
Th' important duty for the donor's sake;
She too was heiress to the widow's taste,
Her love of hoarding, and her dread of waste.

Sometimes the past would on her mind intrude,
And then a conflict full of care ensued;
The thoughts of Rupert on her mind would press,
His worth she knew, but doubted his success:
Of old she saw him heedless; what the boy
Forbore to save, the man would not enjoy;
Oft had he lost the chance that care would seize,
Willing to live, but more to live at ease:
Yet could she not a broken vow defend,
And Heav'n, perhaps, might yet enrich her friend.

Month after month was pass'd, and all were spent
In quiet comfort and in rich content:
Miseries there were, and woes the world around,
But these had not her pleasant dwelling found;
She knew that mothers grieved, and widows wept,
And she was sorry, said her prayers, and slept:
Thus pass'd the seasons, and to Dinah's board
Gave what the seasons to the rich afford;
For she indulged, nor was her heart so small,
That one strong passion should engross it all.

A love of splendour now with av'rice strove,
And oft appear'd to be the stronger love:
A secret pleasure fill'd the Widow's breast,
When she reflected on the hoards possess'd;
But livelier joy inspired th' ambitious Maid,
When she the purchase of those hoards display'd:
In small but splendid room she loved to see
That all was placed in view and harmony;
There, as with eager glance she look'd around,
She much delight in every object found;
While books devout were near her—to destroy,
Should it arise, an overflow of joy.

Within that fair apartment guests might see
The comforts cull'd for wealth by vanity:
Around the room an Indian paper blazed,
With lively tint and figures boldly raised;
Silky and soft upon the floor below,
Th' elastic carpet rose with crimson glow;
All things around implied both cost and care,
What met the eye was elegant or rare:
Some curious trifles round the room were laid,
By hope presented to the wealthy Maid;
Within a costly case of varnish'd wood,
In level rows, her polish'd volumes stood;
Shown as a favour to a chosen few,
To prove what beauty for a book could do:
A silver urn with curious work was fraught;
A silver lamp from Grecian pattern wrought:
Above her head, all gorgeous to behold,
A time-piece stood on feet of burnish'd gold;

A stag's-head crest adorn'd the pictured case,
Through the pure crystal shone the enamell'd face;
And while on brilliants moved the hands of steel,
It click'd from pray'r to pray'r, from meal to meal.

Here as the lady sate, a friendly pair
Stept in t' admire the view, and took their chair:
They then related how the young and gay
Were thoughtless wandering in the broad highway:
How tender damsels sail'd in tilted boats,
And laugh'd with wicked men in scarlet coats;
And how we live in such degen'rate times,
That men conceal their wants, and show their crimes;
While vicious deeds are screen'd by fashion's name,
And what was once our pride is now our shame.

Dinah was musing, as her friends discoursed,
When these last words a sudden entrance forced
Upon her mind, and what was once her pride
And now her shame, some painful views supplied;
Thoughts of the past within her bosom press'd,
And there a change was felt, and was confess'd:
While thus the Virgin strove with secret pain,
Her mind was wandering o'er the troubled main;
Still she was silent, nothing seem'd to see,
But sate and sigh'd in pensive reverie.

The friends prepared new subjects to begin,
When tall Susannah, maiden starch, stalk'd in;
Not in her ancient mode, sedate and slow,
As when she came, the mind she knew, to know;

Nor as, when list'ning half an hour before,
She twice or thrice tapp'd gently at the door;
But, all decorum cast in wrath aside,
"I think the devil's in the man!" she cried;
"A huge tall sailor, with his tawny cheek,
"And pitted face, will with my lady speak;
"He grinn'd an ugly smile, and said he knew,
"Please you, my lady, 't would be joy to you:
"What must I answer?"—Trembling and distress'd
Sank the pale Dinah by her fears oppress'd;
When thus alarm'd, and brooking no delay,
Swift to her room the stranger made his way.

"Revive, my love!" said he, "I've done thee harm,
"Give me thy pardon," and he look'd alarm:
Meantime the prudent Dinah had contrived
Her soul to question, and she then revived.

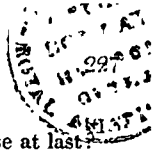
"See! my good friend," and then she raised her head,
"The bloom of life, the strength of youth is fled;
"Living we die; to us the world is dead;
"We parted bless'd with health, and I am now
"Age-struck and feeble—so I find art thou;
"Thine eye is sunken, furrow'd is thy face, [race;
"And downward look'st thou—so we run our
"And happier they whose race is nearly run,
"Their troubles over, and their duties done.

"True, lady, true—we are not girl and boy,
"But time has left us something to enjoy."

"What! thou hast learn'd my fortune?—yes, I live
"To feel how poor the comforts wealth can give:
"Thou too perhaps art wealthy; but our fate
"Still mocks our wishes, wealth is come too late."

"To me nor late nor early; I am come
"Poor as I left thee to my native home:
"Nor yet," said Rupert, "will I grieve; 't is mine
"To share thy comforts, and the glory thine;
"For thou wilt gladly take that generous part
"That both exalts and gratifies the heart;
"While mine rejoices"—"Heavens!" return'd the maid,
"This talk to one so wither'd and decay'd?
"No! all my care is now to fit my mind
"For other spousal, and to die resign'd:
"As friend and neighbour, I shall hope to see
"These noble views, this pious love in thee;
"That we together may the change await,
"Guides and spectators in each other's fate;
"When, fellow-pilgrims, we shall daily crave
"The mutual prayer that arms us for the grave."

Half angry, half in doubt, the lover gazed
On the meek maiden, by her speech amazed;
"Dinah," said he, "dost thou respect thy vows?
"What spousal mean'st thou?—thou art Rupert's spouse;
"The chance is mine to take, and thine to give;
"But, trifling this, if we together live:



' Can I believe, that, after all the past,
'· Our vows, our loves, thou wilt be false at last?
" Something thou hast — I know not what — in
view;
" I find thee pious — let me find thee true."

" Ah! cruel this; but do, my friend, depart;
" And to its feelings leave my wounded heart."

" Nay, speak at once; and Dinah, let me know,
" Mean'st thou to take me, now I'm wreck'd, in
tow?
" Be fair; nor longer keep me in the dark;
" Am I forsaken for a trimmer spark?
" Heaven's spouse thou art not; nor can I believe
" That God accepts her who will man deceive:
" True I am shatter'd, I have service seen,
" And service done, and have in trouble been;
" My cheek (it shames me not) has lost its red,
" And the brown buff is o'er my features spread;
" Perchance my speech is rude; for I among
" Th' untamed have been, in temper and in tongue;
" Have been trepann'd, have lived in toil and care,
" And wrought for wealth I was not doom'd to share;
" It touch'd me deeply, for I felt a pride
" In gaining riches for my destined bride:
" Speak then my fate; for these my sorrows past,
" Time lost, youth fled, hope wearied, and at last
" This doubt of thee — a childish thing to tell,
" But certain truth — my very throat they swell;
" They stop the breath, and but for shame could I
" Give way to weakness, and with passion cry;

" These are unmanly struggles, but I feel
" This hour must end them, and perhaps will heal."—

Here Dinah sigh'd, as if afraid to speak—
And then repeated—" They were frail and weak
" His soul she lov'd, and hoped he had the grace
" To fix his thoughts upon a better place."

She ceased;—with steady glance, as if to see
The very root of this hypocrisy,—
He her small fingers moulded in his hard
And bronzed broad hand; then told her his regard
His best respect were gone, but love had still
Hold in his heart, and govern'd yet the will—
Or he would curse her:—saying this, he threw
The hand in scorn away, and bade adieu
To every lingering hope, with every care in view.

Proud and indignant, suffering, sick, and poor,
He grieved unseen; and spoke of love no more—
Till all he felt in indignation died,
As hers had sunk in avarice and pride.

In health declining, as in mind distress'd,
To some in power his troubles he confess'd,
And shares a parish-gift;—at prayers he sees
The pious Dinah dropp'd upon her knees;
Thence as she walks the street with stately air
As chance directs, oft meet the parted pair;
When he, with thickset coat of badge-man's blue,
Moves near her shaded silk of changeful hue;

When his thin locks of grey approach her braid,
A costly purchase made in beauty's aid;
When his frank air, and his unstudied pace,
Are seen with her soft manner, air, and grace,
And his plain artless look with her sharp meaning face;
It might some wonder in a stranger move,
How these together could have talk'd of love.

Behold them now!—see there a tradesman stands,
And humbly hearkens to some fresh commands;
He moves to speak, she interrupts him—"Stay,"
Her air expresses—"Hark! to what I say:"
Ten paces off, poor Rupert on a seat
Has taken refuge from the noon-day heat,
His eyes on her intent, as if to find
What were the movements of that subtle mind:
How still!—how earnest is he!—it appears
His thoughts are wand'ring through his earlier years
Through years of fruitless labour, to the day
When all his earthly prospects died away:
"Had I," he thinks, "been wealthier of the two,
"Would she have found me so unkind, untrue?
"Or knows not man when poor, what man when rich will do?
"Yes, yes! I feel that I had faithful proved,
"And should have soothed and raised her, bless'd and loved."

But Dinah moves—she had observed before,
The pensive Rupert at an humble door:

Some thoughts of pity raised by his distress,
Some feeling touch of ancient tenderness;
Religion, duty urged the maid to speak,
In terms of kindness to a man so weak:
But pride forbad, and to return would prove
She felt the shame of his neglected love;
Nor wrapp'd in silence could she pass, afraid
Each eye should see her, and each heart upbraid;
One way remain'd—the way the Levite took,
Who without mercy could on misery look;
(A way perceived by craft, approved by pride),
She cross'd and pass'd him on the other side. (1)

(1) [This tale has something of the character of the 'Parting Hour;' but more painful and less refined. It is founded like it on the story of a betrothed youth and maiden, whose marriage is prevented by their poverty; and the youth goes to pursue his fortune at sea, while the damsel awaits his return with an old female relation at home. He is crossed with many disasters, and is not heard of for many years. In the mean time, the virgin gradually imbibes her aunt's paltry love for wealth and finery; and when she comes, after long sordid expectation, to inherit her hoard, feels that those new tastes have supplanted every warmer emotion in her bosom; and, secretly hoping never more to see her youthful lover, gives herself up to comfortable gossiping and formal ostentatious devotion. At last, when she is set in her fine parlour, with her china, and toys, and prayer-books around her, the impatient man bursts into her presence, and reclaims her vows. She answers coldly, that she has now done with the world, and only studies how to prepare to die; and exhorts him to betake himself to the same needful meditations. Nothing can be more forcible or true to nature, than the description of the effect of this cold-blooded cant on the warm and unsuspecting nature of her disappointed suitor.—JEFFREY.]

TALE V.

THE PATRON.

It were all one,
That I should love a bright peculiar star,
And think to wed it; she is so much above me:
In her bright radiance and collateral heat
Must I be comforted, not in her sphere.
All's Well that Ends Well.

Poor wretches, that depend
On greatness' favours, dream as I have done,—
Wake and find nothing. *Cymbeline.*

And since——
Th' affliction of my mind amends, with which
I fear a madness held me. *Tempest.*

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH

TALE V.

THE PATRON. (1)

A BOROUGH-BAILIFF, who to law was train'd,
A wife and sons in decent state maintain'd;
He had his way in life's rough ocean steer'd,
And many a rock and coast of danger clear'd;
He saw where others fail'd, and care had he,
Others in him should not such failings see:
His sons in various busy states were placed,
And all began the sweets of gain to taste,

(1) [The numberless allusions to the nature of a literary dependant's existence in a great lord's house, which occur in Mr. Crabbe's writings, and especially in the tale of 'The Patron,' are quite enough to lead any one who knew his character and feelings to the conclusion that, notwithstanding the kindness and condescension of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland,—which were uniform, and of which he always spoke with gratitude,—the situation he filled at Belvoir was attended with many painful circumstances, and productive in his mind of some of the acutest sensations of wounded pride that have ever been traced by any pen.—*Life, antè*, Vol. I. p. 113.

"Did any of my sons show poetical talent, of which, to my great satisfaction, there are no appearances, the first thing I should do, would be to inculcate upon him the duty of cultivating some honourable profession, and qualifying himself to play a more respectable part in society than the mere poet. And as the best corollary of my doctrine, I would make him get your tale of 'The Patron' by heart from beginning to end."—*Sir Walter Scott to Mr. Crabbe.* See *antè*, Vol. I. p. 203.]

Save *John*, the younger, who, of sprightly parts,
Felt not a love for money-making arts:
In childhood feeble, he, for country air,
Had long resided with a rustic pair;
All round whose room were doleful ballads, songs,
Of lovers' sufferings and of ladies' wrongs;'
Of peevish ghosts who came at dark midnight,
For breach of promise, guilty men to fright;
Love, marriage, murder, were the themes, with these,
All that on idle, ardent spirits seize;
Robbers at land and pirates on the main,
Enchanters foil'd, spells broken, giants slain;
Legends of love, with tales of halls and bowers,
Choice of rare songs, and garlands of choice flowers,
And all the hungry mind without a choice devours.

From village-children kept apart by pride,
With such enjoyments, and without a guide,
Inspired by feelings all such works infused
John snatch'd a pen, and wrote as he perused:
With the like fancy he could make his knight
Slay half a host, and put the rest to flight;
With the like knowledge he could make him ride
From isle to isle at *Parthenissa*'s (1) side;
And with a heart yet free, no busy brain
Form'd wilder notions of delight and pain,
The raptures smiles create, the anguish of disdain.

(1) [The title of a romance written by Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, and published in 1665. "Budgell, in his History of the Boyles, says that 'few who can relish any romance will dislike this:' and Langbane tells us, that 'it yields not, either in beauty, language, or design, to the works of the famous Scuderi or Calprenade, however famous they may be amongst the French, for pieces of this nature.'" — *Biog. Brit.*]

Such were the fruits of John's poetic toil,
Weeds, but still proofs of vigour in the soil;
He nothing purposed but with vast delight,
Let Fancy loose, and wonder'd at her flight:
His notions of poetic worth were high,
And of his own still-hoarded poetry;—
These to his father's house he bore with pride,
A miser's treasure, in his room to hide;
Till spurr'd by glory, to a reading friend
He kindly show'd the sonnets he had penn'd:
With erring judgment, though with heart sincere,
That friend exclaim'd, "These beauties must appear.
In magazines they claim'd their share of fame,
Though undistinguish'd by their author's name;
And with delight the young enthusiast found
The muse of Marcus with applauses crown'd.
This heard the father, and with some alarm;
" The boy," said he, " will neither trade nor farm;
" He for both law and physic is unfit,
" Wit he may have, but cannot live on wit:
" Let him his talents then to learning give
" Where verse is honour'd, and where poets live."

John kept his terms at college unreproved,
Took his degree, and left the life he loved;
Not yet ordain'd, his leisure he employ'd
In the light labours he so much enjoy'd;
His favourite notions and his daring views
Were cherish'd still, and he adored the Muse.

" A little time, and he should burst to light,
" And admiration of the world excite;

" And every friend, now cool and apt to blame
" His fond pursuit, would wonder at his fame."
When led by fancy, and from view retired,
He call'd before him all his heart desired;
" Fame shall be mine, then wealth shall I possess,
" And beauty next an ardent lover bless;
" For me the maid shall leave her nobler state,
" Happy to raise and share her poet's fate."
He saw each day his father's frugal board,
With simple fare by cautious prudence stored:
Where each indulgence was foreweigh'd with care,
And the grand maxims were to save and spare:
Yet in his walks, his closet, and his bed,
All frugal cares and prudent counsels fled;
And bounteous Fancy, for his glowing mind,
Wrought various scenes, and all of glorious kind:
Slaves of the *ring* and *lamp!* (1) what need of you
When Fancy's self such magic deeds can do?

Though rapt in visions of no vulgar kind,
To common subjects stoop'd our poet's mind;
And oft when wearied with more ardent flight,
He felt a spur satiric song to write;
A rival burgess his bold Muse attack'd,
And whipp'd severely for a well known fact;
For while he seem'd to all demure and shy,
Our poet gazed at what was passing by;
And ev'n his father smiled when playful wit,
From his young bard, some haughty object hit.

(1) [See, in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, the History of Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp.]

From ancient times, the borough where they dwelt
Had mighty contest at elections felt:
Sir Godfrey Ball, 'tis true, had held in pay
Electors many for the trying day;
But in such golden chains to bind them all
Required too much for e'en Sir Godfrey Ball.
A member died, and to supply his place,
Two heroes enter'd for th' important race;
Sir Godfrey's friend and Earl Fitzdonnel's son,
Lord Frederick Damer, both prepared to run;
And partial numbers saw with vast delight
Their good young lord oppose the proud old knight.

Our poet's father, at a first request,
Gave the young lord his vote and interest;
And what he could our poet, for he stung
The foe by verse satiric, said and sung.
Lord Frederick heard of all this youthful zeal,
And felt as lords upon a canvass feel;
He read the satire, and he saw the use
That such cool insult, and such keen abuse,
Might on the wavering minds of voting men produce
Then too his praises were in contrast seen,
" A lord as noble as the knight was mean."

" I much rejoice," he cried, " such worth to find;
' To this the world must be no longer blind:
" His glory will descend from sire to son,
" The Burns of English race, the happier Chatterton."
Our poet's mind, now hurried and elate,
Alarm'd the anxious parent for his fate;

Who saw with sorrow, should their friend succeed,
That much discretion would the poet need.

Their friend succeeded, and repaid the zeal
The poet felt, and made opposers feel,
By praise (from lords how soothing and how sweet!)
And invitation to his noble seat.
The father ponder'd, doubtful if the brain
Of his proud boy such honour could sustain;
Pleased with the favours offer'd to a son,
But seeing dangers few so ardent shun.

Thus, when they parted, to the youthful breast
The father's fears were by his love impress'd:
" There will you find, my son, the courteous ease
" That must subdue the soul it means to please;
" That soft attention which ev'n beauty pays
" To wake our passions, or provoke our praise:
" There all the eye beholds will give delight,
" Where every sense is flatter'd like the sight:
" This is your peril; can you from such scene
" Of splendour part, and feel your mind serene,
" And in the father's humble state resume
" The frugal diet and the narrow room?"
To this the youth with cheerful heart replied,
Pleased with the trial, but as yet untried;
And while professing patience, should he fail,
He suffer'd hope o'er reason to prevail.

Impatient, by the morning mail convey'd,
The happy guest his promised visit paid;

And now arriving at the Hall, he tried
For air composed, serene and satisfied;
As he had practised in his room alone,
And there acquired a free and easy tone:
There he had said, "Whatever the degree
"A man obtains, what more than man is he?"
And when arrived — "This room is but a room;
"Can aught we see the steady soul o'ercome?
"Let me in all a manly firmness show,
"Upheld by talents, and their value know."

This reason urged; but it surpass'd his skill
To be in act as manly as in will:
When he his Lordship and the Lady saw,
Brave as he was, he felt oppress'd with awe;
And spite of verse, that so much praise had won,
The poet found he as the Bailiff's son.

But dinner came, and the succeeding hours
Fix'd his weak nerves, and raised his failing powers:
Praised and assured, he ventured once or twice
On some remark, and bravely broke the ice;
So that at night, reflecting on his words,
He found, in time, he might converse with lords

Now was the Sister of his Patron seen —
A lovely creature, with majestic mien;
Who, softly smiling while she look'd so fair,
Praised the young poet with such friendly air;
Such winning frankness in her looks express'd,
And such attention to her brother's guest;

That so much beauty, join'd with speech so kind,
Raised strong emotions in the poet's mind;
Till reason fail'd his bosom to defend,
From the sweet power of this enchanting friend.—
Rash boy! what hope thy frantic mind invades?
What love confuses, and what pride persuades?
Awake to truth! shouldst thou deluded feed
On hopes so groundless, thou art mad indeed.

What say'st thou, wise one? "that all powerful Love
"Can fortune's strong impediments remove;
"Nor is it strange that worth should wed to worth.
"The pride of genius with the pride of birth."
While thou art dreaming thus, the Beauty spies
Love in thy tremour, passion in thine eyes;
And with th' amusement pleased, of conquest vain
She seeks her pleasure, careless of thy pain;
She gives thee praise to humble and confound,
Smiles to ensnare, and flatters thee to wound.

Why has she said that in the lowest state
The noble mind ensures a noble fate?
And why thy daring mind to glory call?
That thou may'st dare and suffer, soar and fall.
Beauties are tyrants, and if they can reign
They have no feeling for their subjects pain;
Their victim's anguish gives their charms applause
And their chief glory is the wo they cause:
Something of this was felt, in spite of love,
Which hope, in spite of reason, would remove.

Thus lived our youth, with conversation, books,
And Lady Emma's soul-subduing looks;
Lost in delight, astonish'd at his lot,
All prudence banish'd, all advice forgot—
Hopes, fears, and every thought, were fix'd upon
the spot.

'Twas autumn yet, and many a day must frown
On Brandon-Hall, ere went my Lord to town;
Meantime the father, who had heard his boy
Lived in a round of luxury and joy,
And justly thinking that the youth was one
Who, meeting danger, was unskill'd to shun;
Knowing his temper, virtue, spirit, zeal,
How prone to hope and trust, believe and feel;
These on the parent's soul their weight impress'd,
And thus he wrote the counsels of his breast:—

" John, thou'rt a genius; thou hast some pretence,
" I think, to wit,—but hast thou sterling sense?
" That which, like gold, may through the world go
forth,
" And always pass for what 'tis truly worth;
" Whereas this genius, like a bill, must take
" Only the value our opinions make.

" Men famed for wit, of dangerous talents vain,
" Treat those of common parts with proud disdain;
" The powers that wisdom would, improving, hide,
" They blaze abroad with inconsid'rate pride;
" While yet but mere probationers for fame,
" They seize the honour they should then disclaim:

" Honour so hurried to the light must fade,
" The lasting laurels flourish in the shade.

" Genius is jealous: I have heard of some
" Who, if unnoticed, grew perversely dumb;
" Nay, different talents would their envy raise;
" Poets have sicken'd at a dancer's praise;
" And one, the happiest writer of his time,(1)
" Grew pale at hearing Reynolds was sublime;
" That Rutland's Duchess wore a heavenly smile—
" 'And I,' said he, 'neglected all the while!'

" A waspish tribe are these, on gilded wings,
" Humming their lays, and brandishing their stings;
" And thus they move their friends and foes among,
" Prepared for soothing or satiric song.

" Hear me, my Boy; thou hast a virtuous mind—
" But be thy virtues of the sober kind;
" Be not a Quixote, ever up in arms
" To give the guilty and the great alarms:
" If never heeded, thy attack is vain;
" And if they heed thee, they'll attack again;
" Then too in striking at that heedless rate,
" Thou in an instant may'st decide thy fate.

" Leave admonition—let the vicar give
" Rules how the nobles of his flock should live;

(1) [Goldsmith. "Those who were in any way distinguished excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible." — CROKER's *Boswell*, vol. i. p. 422.]

" Nor take that simple fancy to thy brain,
" That thou canst cure the wicked and the vain.

" Our Pope, they say, once entertain'd the whim,
" Who fear'd not God should be afraid of him;(1)
" But grant they fear'd him, was it further said,
" That he reform'd the hearts he made afraid?
" Did Chartres mend? (2) Ward (3), Waters (4), and a score
" Of flagrant felons, with his floggings sore?
" Was Cibber silenced? No; with vigour blest,
" And brazen front, half earnest, half in jest,
" He dared the bard to battle, and was seen
" In all his glory match'd with Pope and spleen;
" Himself he stripp'd, the harder blow to hit,
" Then boldly match'd his ribaldry with wit;
" The poet's conquest truth and time proclaim,
" But yet the battle hurt his peace and fame. (5)

(1) ["Yes, I am proud; I must be proud to see
Men not afraid of God, afraid of me;
Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
Yet touch'd and shamed by ridicule alone."
POPE, *Epilogue to Satires.*]

(2) Chartres was a man infamous for all manner of vices. He died in Scotland, in 1731. The populace at his funeral raised a great riot, almost tore the body out of the coffin, and cast dead dogs, &c. into the grave along with it.]

(3) [John Ward, of Hackney. Being convicted of forgery, he was expelled the house of commons, suffered on the pillory, and afterwards imprisoned. During his imprisonment, his amusement was to give poison to dogs and cats, and see them expire by slower or quicker torments.]

(4) [A dexterous attorney, who, by a diligent attendance on the necessities of others, acquired an immense fortune, and represented the borough of Bridport in parliament. He died in 1745.]

(5) [" Pope, in 1743, published a new edition of the Dunciad, in which he degraded Tibbald from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned Cibber in his stead. Colley resented the affront in a pamphlet, which, Pope said,

" Strive not too much for favour; seem at ease,
" And rather pleased thyself, than bent to please:
" Upon thy lord with decent care attend,
" But not too near; thou canst not be a friend;
" And favourite be not, 'tis a dangerous post—
" Is gain'd by labour, and by fortune lost:
" Talents like thine may make a man approved,
" But other talents trusted and beloved.
" Look round, my son, and thou wilt early see
" The kind of man thou art not form'd to be.

" The real favourites of the great are they
" Who to their views and wants attention pay,
" And pay it ever; who, with all their skill,
" Dive to the heart, and learn the secret will;
" If that be vicious, soon can they provide
" The favourite ill, and o'er the soul preside;
" For vice is weakness, and the artful know
" Their power increases as the passions grow;
" If indolent the pupil, hard their task;
" Such minds will ever for amusement ask;
" And great the labour! for a man to choose
" Objects for one whom nothing can amuse;
" For ere those objects can the soul delight,
" They must to joy the soul herself excite;

' would be as good as a dose of hartshorn to him;' but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr. Richardson relate, that he attended his father, the painter, on a visit, when Cibber's pamphlet came into the hands of Pope, who said, 'these things are my diversion.' They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhing with anguish; and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had that day been the lot of Pope."—JOHNSON.]

" Therefore it is, this patient, watchful kind
" With gentle friction stir the drowsy mind:
" Fix'd on their end, with caution they proceed,
" And sometimes give, and sometimes take the lead;
" Will now a hint convey, and then retire,
" And let the spark awake the lingering fire;
" Or seek new joys, and livelier pleasures bring,
" To give the jaded sense a quick'ning spring.

" These arts, indeed, my son must not pursue;
" Nor must he quarrel with the tribe that do:
" It is not safe another's crimes to know,
" Nor is it wise our proper worth to show:—
" 'My lord,' you say, 'engaged me for that worth;'—
" True, and preserve it ready to come forth:
" If question'd, fairly answer,—and that done,
" Shrink back, be silent, and thy father's son;
" For they who doubt thy talents scorn thy boast,
" But they who grant them will dislike thee most:
" Observe the prudent; they in silence sit,
" Display no learning, and affect no wit;
" They hazard nothing, nothing they assume,
" But know the useful art of *acting dumb*.
" Yet to their eyes each varying look appears,
" And every word finds entrance at their ears.

" Thou art Religion's advocate—take heed,
" Hurt not the cause, thy pleasure 'tis to plead;
" With wine before thee, and with wits beside,
" Do not in strength of reasoning powers confide;

" What seems to thee convincing, certain, plain,
" They will deny, and dare thee to maintain;
" And thus will triumph o'er thy eager youth,
" While thou wilt grieve for so disgracing truth.

" With pain I've seen, these wrangling wits among,
" Faith's weak defenders, passionate and young;
" Weak thou art not, yet not enough on guard,
" Where wit and humour keep their watch and ward:
" Men gay and noisy will o'erwhelm thy sense,
" Then loudly laugh at truth's and thy expense;
" While the kind ladies will do all they can
" To check their mirth, and cry, '*The good young man!*'

" Prudence, my Boy, forbids thee to commend
" The cause or party of thy noble friend;
" What are his praises worth, who must be known
" To take a Patron's maxims for his own?
" When ladies sing, or in thy presence play,
" Do not, dear John, in rapture melt away;
" 'Tis not thy part, there will be list'ners round,
" To cry *Divine!* and dote upon the sound;
" Remember, too, that though the poor have ears,
" They take not in the music of the spheres;
" They must not feel the warble and the thrill,
" Or be dissolved in ecstasy at will;
" Beside, 'tis freedom in a youth like thee
" To drop his awe, and deal in ecstasy!

" In silent ease, at least in silence, dine,
" Nor one opinion start of food or wine:
" Thou know'st that all the science thou can boast,
" Is of thy father's simple boil'd and roast;
" Nor always these; he sometimes saved his cash,
" By interlinear days of frugal hash:
" Wine hadst thou seldom; wilt thou be so vain
" As to decide on claret or champagne?
" Dost thou from me derive this taste sublime,
" Who order port the dozen at a time?
" When (every glass held precious in our eyes)
" We judged the value by the bottle's size:
" Then never merit for thy praise assume,
" Its worth well knows each servant in the room.

" Hard, Boy, thy task, to steer thy way among
" That servile, supple, shrewd, insidious throng;
" Who look upon thee as of doubtful race,
" An interloper, one who wants a place:
" Freedom with these, let thy free soul condemn,
" Nor with thy heart's concerns associate them.

" Of all be cautious—but be most afraid
" Of the pale charms that grace My Lady's Maid;
" Of those sweet dimples, of that fraudful eye,
" The frequent glance design'd for thee to spy;
" The soft bewitching look, the fond bewailing sigh:
" Let others frown and envy; she the while
" (Insidious syren!) will demurely smile;
" And for her gentle purpose, every day
" Inquire thy wants, and meet thee in thy way;

" She has her blandishments, and, though so weak,
" Her person pleases, and her actions speak:
" At first her folly may her aim defeat;
" But kindness shown, at length will kindness meet:
" Have some offended? them will she disdain,
" And, for thy sake, contempt and pity feign;
" She hates the vulgar, she admires to look
" On woods and groves, and dotes upon a book;
" Let her once see thee on her features dwell,
" And hear one sigh, then liberty farewell.

" But, John, remember we cannot maintain
" A poor, proud girl, extravagant and vain.

" Doubt much of friendship: shouldst thou find a friend
" Pleased to advise thee, anxious to commend;
" Should he the praises he has heard report,
" And confidence (in thee confiding) court;
" Much of neglected Patrons should he say,
" And then exclaim—' How long must merit stay!'
" Then show how high thy modest hopes may stretch,
" And point to stations far beyond thy reach;—
" Let such designer, by thy conduct, see
" (Civil and cool) he makes no dupe of thee;
" And he will quit thee, as a man too wise
" For him to ruin first, and then despise.

" Such are thy dangers:—yet, if thou canst steer
" Past all the perils, all the quicksands clear,

" Then may'st thou profit; but if storms prevail,
" If foes beset thee, if thy spirits fail,—
" No more of winds or waters be the sport,
" But in thy father's mansion find a port."

Our poet read.—" It is in truth," said he,
" Correct in part, but what is *this* to me?
" I love a foolish Abigail! in base
" And sordid office! fear not such disgrace:
" Am I so blind?" " Or thou wouldst surely see
" That lady's fall, if she should stoop to thee!"
" The cases differ." " True! for what surprise
" Could from thy marriage with the maid arise?
" But through the island would the shame be spread,
" Should the fair mistress deign with thee to wed."

John saw not this; and many a week had pass'd,
While the vain Beauty held her victim fast;
The Noble Friend still condescension show'd,
And, as before, with praises overflow'd;
But his grave Lady took a silent view
Of all that pass'd, and smiling, pitied too.

Cold grew the foggy morn, the day was brief,
Loose on the cherry hung the crimson leaf;
The dew dwelt ever on the herb; the woods
Roar'd with strong blasts, with mighty showers the floods:
All green was vanish'd, save of pine and yew,
That still displayed their melancholy hue;
Save the green holly with its berries red,
And the green moss that o'er the gravel spread.

To public views my Lord must soon attend;
And soon the Ladies—would they leave their friend?
The time was fix'd—approach'd—was near—was come;
The trying time that fill'd his soul with gloom:
Thoughtful our poet in the morning rose,
And cried, "One hour my fortune will disclose;
"Terrific hour! from thee have I to date
"Life's loftier views, or my degraded state;
"For now to be what I have been before
"Is so to fall, that I can rise no more."

The morning meal was past; and all around
The mansion rang with each discordant sound;
Haste was in every foot, and every look
The trav'ller's joy for London-journey spoke:
Not so our youth; whose feelings, at the noise
Of preparation, had no touch of joys:
He pensive stood, and saw each carriage drawn,
With lackies mounted, ready on the lawn:
The Ladies came; and John in terror threw
One painful glance, and then his eyes withdrew;
Not with such speed, but he in other eyes
With anguish read—"I pity but despise—
"Unhappy boy! presumptuous scribbler!—you,
"To dream such dreams!—be sober, and adieu!"

Then came the Noble Friend—"And will my lord
"Vouchsafe no comfort? drop no soothing word?
"Yes, he must speak:" he speaks, "My good young friend,
"You know my views; upon my care depend;

" My hearty thanks to your good father pay,
" And be a student.—Harry, drive away."

Stillness reign'd all around; of late so full
The busy scene, deserted now and dull:
Stern is his nature who forbears to feel
Gloom o'er his spirits on such trials steal;
Most keenly felt our poet as he went
From room to room without a fix'd intent;
"And here," he thought, "I was caress'd; admired
" Were here my songs; she smiled, and I aspired:
" The change how grievous!" As he mused, a dame
Busy and peevish to her duties came;
Aside the tables and the chairs she drew,
And sang and mutter'd in the poet's view:—
" This was her fortune; here they leave the poor;
" Enjoy themselves, and think of us no more;
" I had a promise—" here his pride and shame
Urged him to fly from this familiar dame;
He gave one farewell look, and by a coach
Reach'd his own mansion at the night's approach.

His father met him with an anxious air,
Heard his sad tale, and check'd what seem'd despair:
Hope was in him corrected, but alive;
My lord would something for a friend contrive;
His word was pledged: our hero's feverish mind
Admitted this, and half his grief resign'd:
But, when three months had fled, and every day
Drew from the sickening hopes their strength away,

The youth became abstracted, pensive, dull,
He utter'd nothing, though his heart was full;
Teased by inquiring words and anxious looks,
And all forgetful of his Muse and books;
Awake he mourn'd, but in his sleep perceived
A lovely vision that his pain relieved:—
His soul, transported, hail'd the happy seat,
Where once his pleasure was so pure and sweet;
Where joys departed came in blissful view,
Till reason waked, and not a joy he knew.

Questions now vex'd his spirit, most from those
Who are call'd friends, because they are not foes:
"John!" they would say; he, starting, turn'd around;
"John!" there was something shocking in the sound:
Ill brook'd he then the pert familiar phrase,
The untaught freedom, and th' inquiring gaze;
Much was his temper touch'd, his spleen provoked,
When ask'd how ladies talk'd, or walk'd, or look'd?
"What said my Lord of politics? how spent
"He there his time? and was he glad he went?"

At length a letter came, both cool and brief,
But still it gave the burthen'd heart relief:
Though not inspired by lofty hopes, the youth
Placed much reliance on Lord Frederick's truth;
Summon'd to town, he thought the visit one
Where something fair and friendly would be done;
Although he judged not, as before his fall,
When all was love and promise at the Hall.

Arrived in town, he early sought to know
The fate such dubious friendship would bestow;
At a tall building trembling he appear'd,
And his low rap was indistinctly heard;
A well-known servant came—"Awhile," said he,
"Be pleased to wait; my Lord has company."

Alone our hero sate; the news in hand,
Which though he read, he could not understand:
Cold was the day; in days so cold as these
There needs a fire, where minds and bodies freeze;
The vast and echoing room, the polish'd grate,
The crimson chairs, the sideboard with its plate;
The splendid sofa, which, though made for rest,
He then had thought it freedom to have press'd;
The shining tables, curiously inlaid,
Were all in comfortless proud style display'd;
And to the troubled feelings terror gave,
That made the once-dear friend, the sick'ning slave.

"Was he forgotten?" Thrice upon his ear
Struck the loud clock, yet no relief was near:
Each rattling carriage, and each thundering stroke
On the loud door, the dream of fancy broke;
Oft as a servant chanced the way to come,
"Brings he a message?" no! he pass'd the room:
At length 't is certain; "Sir, you will attend
'At twelve on Thursday!" Thus the day had end.

Vex'd by these tedious hours of needless pain,
John left the noble mansion with disdain;

For there was something in that still, cold place,
That seem'd to threaten and portend disgrace.

Punctual again the modest rap declared
The youth attended; then was all prepared:
For the same servant, by his lord's command,
A paper offer'd to his trembling hand:
"No more!" he cried: "disdains he to afford
"One kind expression, one consoling word?"

With troubled spirit he began to read
That "In the Church my lord could not succeed;"
Who had "to peers of either kind applied,
"And was with dignity and grace denied;
"While his own livings were by men possess'd,
"Not likely in their chancels yet to rest;
"And therefore, all things weigh'd (as he, my lord,
"Had done maturely, and he pledged his word),
"Wisdom it seem'd for John to turn his view
"To busier scenes, and bid the Church adieu!"

Here grieved the youth: he felt his father's pride
Must with his own be shock'd and mortified;
But, when he found his future comforts placed
Where he, alas! conceived himself disgraced—
In some appointment on the London quays,
He bade farewell to honour and to ease;
His spirit fell, and, from that hour assured
How vain his dreams, he suffer'd and was cured.

Our Poet hurried on, with wish to fly,
From all mankind, to be conceal'd, and die.

Alas! what hopes, what high romantic views
Did that one visit to the soul infuse,
Which, cherish'd with such love, 'twas worse than death to lose!
Still he would strive, though painful was the strife,
To walk in this appointed road of life;
On these low duties duteous he would wait,
And patient bear the anguish of his fate.
Thanks to the Patron, but of coldest kind,
Express'd the sadness of the Poet's mind;
Whose heavy hours were pass'd with busy men,
In the dull practice of th' official pen;
Who to Superiors must in time impart
(The custom this) his progress in their art:
But, so had grief on his perception wrought,
That all unheeded were the duties taught;
No answers gave he when his trial came,
Silent he stood, but suffering without shame;
And they observed that words severe or kind
Made no impression on his wounded mind:
For all perceived from whence his failure rose,
Some grief whose cause he deign'd not to disclose.
A soul averse from scenes and works so new,
Fear ever shrinking from the vulgar crew;
Distaste for each mechanic law and rule,
Thoughts of past honour and a patron cool;
A grieving parent, and a feeling mind,
Timid and ardent, tender and refined:
These all with mighty force the youth assail'd,
Till his soul fainted, and his reason fail'd:
When this was known, and some debate arose,
How they who saw it should the fact disclose,

He found their purpose, and in terror fled
From unseen kindness, with mistaken dread.

Meantime the parent was distress'd to find
His son no longer for a priest design'd;
But still he gain'd some comfort by the news
Of John's promotion, though with humbler views:
For he conceived that in no distant time
The boy would learn to scramble and to climb;
He little thought his son, his hope and pride,
His favour'd boy, was now a home denied:
Yes! while the parent was intent to trace
How men in office climb from place to place,
By day, by night, o'er moor, and heath, and hill,
Roved the sad youth, with ever-changing will,
Of every aid bereft, exposed to every ill.

Thus as he sate, absorb'd in all the care
And all the hope that anxious fathers share,
A friend abruptly to his presence brought,
With trembling hand, the subject of his thought;
Whom he had found afflicted and subdued
By hunger, sorrow, cold, and solitude.

Silent he enter'd the forgotten room,
As ghostly forms may be conceived to come;
With sorrow-shrunken face and hair upright,
He look'd dismay, neglect, despair, affright;
But, dead to comfort, and on misery thrown,
His parent's loss he felt not, nor his own.

The good man, struck with horror, cried aloud,
And drew around him an astonish'd crowd;
The sons and servants to the father ran,
To share the feelings of the griev'd old man.

"Our brother, speak!" they all exclaim'd; "explain
"Thy grief, thy suffering:"—but they ask'd in vain:
The friend told all he knew; and all was known,
Save the sad causes whence the ills had grown:
But, if obscure the cause, they all agreed
From rest and kindness must the cure proceed:
And he was cured; for quiet, love, and care,
Strove with the gloom, and broke on the despair:
Yet slow their progress, and, as vapours move
Dense and reluctant from the wintry grove;
All is confusion till the morning light
Gives the dim scene obscurely to the sight;
More and yet more defined the trunks appear,
Till the wild prospect stands distinct and clear;—
So the dark mind of our young poet grew
Clear and sedate; the dreadful mist withdrew;
And he resembled that bleak wintry scene,
Sad, though unclouded; dismal, though serene.

At times he utter'd, "What a dream was mine!
"And what a prospect! glorious and divine!
"Oh! in that room, and on that night to see
"These looks, that sweetness beaming all on me:
"That syren-flattery—and to send me then,
"Hope-raised and soften'd, to those heartless men;

" That dark-brow'd stern Director, pleased to show
" Knowledge of subjects, I disdain'd to know ;
" Cold and controlling — but 'tis gone — 'tis past ;
" I had my trial, and have peace at last."

Now grew the youth resigned: he bade adieu
To all that hope, to all that fancy drew;
His frame was languid, and the hectic heat
Flush'd on his pallid face, and countless beat
The quick'ning pulse, and faint the limbs that bore
The slender form that soon would breathe no more.

Then hope of holy kind the soul sustain'd,
And not a lingering thought of earth remain'd;
Now Heaven had all, and he could smile at Love,
And the wild sallies of his youth reprove;
Then could he dwell upon the tempting days,
The proud aspiring thought, the partial praise;
Victorious now his worldly views were closed,
And on the bed of death the youth reposed.

The father grieved — but as the poet's heart
Was all unfitted for his earthly part;
As, he conceived, some other haughty fair
Would, had he lived, have led him to despair;
As, with this fear, the silent grave shut out
All feverish hope, and all tormenting doubt;
While the strong faith the pious youth possess'd,
His hope enlivening, gave his sorrows rest;
Soothed by these thoughts, he felt a mournful joy
For his aspiring and devoted boy.

Meantime the news through various channels spread,
The youth, once favour'd with such praise, was dead:
" Emma," the Lady cried, " my words attend,
" Your syren-smiles have kill'd your humble friend;
" The hope you raised can now delude no more,
" Nor charms, that once inspired, can now restore."

Faint was the flush of anger and of shame,
That o'er the cheek of conscious beauty came:
" You censure not," said she, " the sun's bright rays,
" When fools imprudent dare the dangerous gaze;
" And should a stripling look till he were blind,
" You would not justly call the light unkind:
" But is he dead? and am I to suppose
" The power of poison in such looks as those?"
She spoke, and, pointing to the mirror, cast
A pleased gay glance, and curtsied as she pass'd.

My Lord, to whom the poet's fate was told
Was much affected, for a man so cold:
" Dead!" said his lordship, " run distracted, mad!
" Upon my soul I'm sorry for the lad;
" And now, no doubt, th' obliging world will say
" That my harsh usage help'd him on his way:
" What! I suppose, I should have nursed his muse,
" And with champagne have brighten'd up his views;
" Then had he made me famed my whole life long,
" And stunn'd my ears with gratitude and song.
" Still should the father hear that I regret
" Our joint misfortune — Yes! I'll not forget." —

Thus they: — The father to his grave convey'd
The son he loved, and his last duties paid.

" There lies my Boy," he cried, " of care bereft,
" And, Heav'n be praised, I've not a genius left:
" No one among ye, sons! is doomed to live
" On high-raised hopes of what the Great may give; (1)
" None, with exalted views and fortunes mean,
" To die in anguish, or to live in spleen:
" Your pious brother soon escaped the strife
" Of such contention, but it cost his life;
" You then, my sons, upon yourselves depend,
" And in your own exertions find the friend." (2)

(1) [" Let every man of letters, who wishes for patronage, read D'Alembert's 'Essay on Living with the Great,' before he enters the house of a patron: and let him always remember the fate of Racine, who, having drawn up, at Madame de Maintenon's secret request, a memorial that strongly painted the distresses of the French nation, the weight of their taxes, and the expenses of the Court, she could not resist the importunity of Louis XIV., but showed him her friend's paper, against whom the king immediately conceived a violent indignation, because a poet should dare to busy himself with politics. Racine had the weakness to take this anger so much to heart, that it brought on a low fever, which hastened his death." — WARTON.]

(2) ['The Patron' contains specimens of very various excellence. The story is that of a young man of humble birth, who shows an early genius for poetry; and having been, with some inconvenience to his parents, provided with a frugal, but regular education, is at last taken notice of by a nobleman in the neighbourhood, who promises to promote him in the church, and invites him to pass an autumn with him at his seat in the country. Here the youth, in spite of the admirable admonitions of his father, is gradually overcome by a taste for elegant enjoyments, and allows himself to fall in love with the enchanting sister of his protector. When the family leave him with indifference, to return to town, he feels the first pang of humiliation and disappointment; and afterwards, when he finds that all his noble friend's fine promises end in obtaining for him a poor drudging place in the Customs, he pines and pines till he falls into insanity; and recovers, only to die prematurely in the arms of his disap-

pointed parents. The history of the poet's progress, the father's warnings, the blandishments of the careless syren by whom he was enchanted, are all excellent. The description of the breaking up of that enchantment cannot fail to strike, if it had no other merit, from its mere truth and accuracy. The humiliation and irritability of the youth on his first return home are also represented with a thorough knowledge of human nature. —JEFFREY.]

TALE VI.

THE FRANK COURTSHIP.

Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make a curtsy, and say, "Father, as it please you;" but for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy, and say, "Father, as it pleases me."

Much Ado about Nothing.

He cannot flatter, he!
An honest mind and plain—he must speak truth.

King Lear.

God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another; you jig, you amble, you nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. — *Hamlet.*

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Am I contemn'd for pride and scorn so much?

Much Ado about Nothing.

TALE VI.

THE FRANK COURTSHIP.

GRAVE *Jonas Kindred*, Sybil Kindred's sire,
Was six feet high, and look'd six inches higher;
Erect, morose, determined, solemn, slow,
Who knew the man, could never cease to know;
His faithful spouse, when Jonas was not by,
Had a firm presence and a steady eye;
But with her husband dropp'd her look and tone,
And Jonas ruled unquestion'd and alone.

He read, and oft would quote the sacred words,
How pious husbands of their wives were lords;
Sarah call'd Abraham Lord! and who could be,
So Jonas thought, a greater man than he?
Himself he view'd with undisguised respect,
And never pardon'd freedom or neglect.

They had one daughter, and this favourite child
Had oft the father of his spleen beguiled;
Soothed by attention from her early years,
She gain'd all wishes by her smiles or tears:

But *Sybil* then was in that playful time,
When contradiction is not held a crime;
When parents yield their children idle praise
For faults corrected in their after days.

Peace in the sober house of Jonas dwelt,
Where each his duty and his station felt:
Yet not that peace some favour'd mortals find,
In equal views and harmony of mind;
Not the soft peace that blesses those who love,
Where all with one consent in union move;
But it was that which one superior will
Commands, by making all inferiors still;
Who bids all murmurs, all objections cease,
And with imperious voice announces—Peace!

They were, to wit, a remnant of that crew,
Who, as their foes maintain, their Sovereign slew;
An independent race, precise, correct,
Who ever married in the kindred sect:
No son or daughter of their order wed
A friend to England's king who lost his head;
Cromwell was still their Saint, and when they met,
They mourn'd that Saints (1) were not our rulers yet.

Fix'd were their habits; they arose betimes,
Then pray'd their hour, and sang their party-rhymes:
Their meals were plenteous, regular and plain;
The trade of Jonas brought him constant gain;

(1) This appellation is here used not ironically, nor with malignity; but it is taken merely to designate a morosely devout people, with peculiar austerity of manners.

Vender of hops and malt, of coals and corn—
And, like his father, he was merchant born:
Neat was their house; each table, chair, and stool,
Stood in its place, or moving moved by rule;
No lively print or picture graced the room;
A plain brown paper lent its decent gloom;
But here the eye, in glancing round, survey'd
A small recess that seem'd for china made;
Such pleasing pictures seem'd this pencill'd ware,
That few would search for nobler objects there—
Yet, turn'd by chosen friends, and there appear'd
His stern, strong features, whom they all revered;
For there in lofty air was seen to stand
The bold Protector of the conquer'd land;
Drawn in that look with which he wept and swore,
Turn'd out the Members, and made fast the door,
Ridding the House of every knave and drone,
Forced, though it grieved his soul, to rule alone.
The stern still smile each friend approving gave,
Then turn'd the view, and all again were grave. (1)

There stood a clock, though small the owner's need,
For habit told when all things should proceed;
Few their amusements, but when friends appear'd,
They with the world's distress their spirits cheer'd;
The nation's guilt, that would not long endure
The reign of men so modest and so pure:
Their town was large, and seldom pass'd a day
But some had fail'd, and others gone astray;

(1) [Such was the actual consolation of a small knot of Presbyterians in a country town, about sixty years ago.]

Clerks had absconded, wives eloped, girls flown
To Gretna-Green, or sons rebellious grown;
Quarrels and fires arose;—and it was plain
The times were bad; the Saints had ceased to reign!
A few yet lived, to languish and to mourn
For good old manners never to return.

Jonas had sisters, and of these was one
Who lost a husband and an only son:
Twelve months her sables she in sorrow wore,
And mourn'd so long that she could mourn no more.
Distant from Jonas, and from all her race,
She now resided in a lively place;
There, by the sect unseen, at whist she play'd,
Nor was of churchmen or their church afraid:
If much of this the graver brother heard,
He something censured, but he little fear'd;
He knew her rich and frugal; for the rest,
He felt no care, or, if he felt, suppress'd:
Nor for companion when she ask'd her Niece,
Had he suspicions that disturb'd his peace;
Frugal and rich, these virtues as a charm
Preserved the thoughtful man from all alarm;
An infant yet, she soon would home return,
Nor stay the manners of the world to learn;
Meantime his boys would all his care engross,
And be his comforts if he felt the loss.

The sprightly *Sybil*, pleased and unconfined,
Felt the pure pleasure of the op'ning mind:
All here was gay and cheerful—all at home
Unvaried quiet and unruffled gloom:

There were no changes, and amusements few;—
Here, all was varied, wonderful, and new;
There were plain meals, plain dresses, and grave looks—
Here, gay companions and amusing books;
And the young Beauty soon began to taste
The light vocations of the scene she graced.

A man of business feels it as a crime
On calls domestic to consume his time;
Yet this grave man had not so cold a heart,
But with his daughter he was grieved to part:
And he demanded that in every year
The Aunt and Niece should at his house appear.

"Yes! we must go, my child, and by our dress
"A grave conformity of mind express;
"Must sing at meeting, and from cards refrain,
"The more t' enjoy when we return again."

Thus spake the Aunt, and the discerning child
Was pleased to learn how fathers are beguiled.
Her artful part the young dissembler took,
And from the matron caught th' approving look:
When thrice the friends had met, excuse was sent
For more delay, and Jonas was content;
Till a tall maiden by her sire was seen,
In all the bloom and beauty of sixteen;
He gazed admiring;—she, with visage prim,
Glanced an arch look of gravity on him;
For she was gay at heart, but wore disguise,
And stood a vestal in her father's eyes;

Pure, pensive, simple, sad; the damsel's heart,
When Jonas praised, reproved her for the part;
For Sybil, fond of pleasure, gay and light,
Had still a secret bias to the right;
Vain as she was—and flattery made her vain—
Her simulation gave her bosom pain.

Again return'd, the Matron and the Niece
Found the late quiet gave their joy increase;
The aunt infirm, no more her visits paid,
But still with her sojourn'd the favourite maid.
Letters were sent when franks could be procured,
And when they could not, silence was endured;
All were in health, and if they older grew,
It seem'd a fact that none among them knew;
The aunt and niece still led a pleasant life,
And quiet days had Jonas and his wife.

Near him a Widow dwelt of worthy fame,
Like his her manners, and her creed the same;
The wealth her husband left, her care retain'd
For one tall Youth, and widow she remain'd;
His love respectful all her care repaid,
Her wishes watch'd, and her commands obey'd.

Sober he was and grave from early youth,
Mindful of forms, but more intent on truth;
In a light drab he uniformly dress'd,
And look serene th' unruffled mind express'd;
A hat with ample verge his brows o'erspread,
And his brown locks curl'd graceful on his head;

Yet might observers in his speaking eye
Some observation, some acuteness spy;
The friendly thought it keen, the treacherous deem'd
it sly;
Yet not a crime could foe or friend detect,
His actions all were, like his speech, correct;
And they who jested on a mind so sound,
Upon his virtues must their laughter found;
Chaste, sober, solemn, and devout they named
Him who was thus, and not of *this* ashamed.

Such were the virtues Jonas found in one
In whom he warmly wish'd to find a son:
Three years had pass'd since he had Sybil seen;
But she was doubtless what she once had been,
Lovely and mild, obedient and discreet;
The pair must love whenever they should meet;
Then ere the widow or her son should choose
Some happier maid, he would explain his views:
Now she, like him, was politic and shrewd,
With strong desire of lawful gain embued;
To all he said, she bow'd with much respect,
Pleased to comply, yet seeming to reject;
Cool and yet eager, each admired the strength
Of the opponent, and agreed at length:
As a drawn battle shows to each a force,
Powerful as his, he honours it of course;
So in these neighbours, each the power discern'd,
And gave the praise that was to each return'd.

Jonas now ask'd his daughter—and the Aunt,
Though loth to lose her, was obliged to grant:—

But would not Sybil to the matron cling,
And fear to leave the shelter of her wing?
No! in the young there lives a love of change,
And to the easy, they prefer the strange!
Then, too, the joys she once pursued with zeal,
From whist and visits sprung, she ceased to feel:
When with the matrons Sybil first sat down,
To cut for partners and to stake her crown,
This to the youthful maid preferment seem'd,
Who thought what woman she was then esteem'd;
But in few years, when she perceived, indeed,
The real woman to the girl succeed,
No longer tricks and honours fill'd her mind,
But other feelings, not so well defined;
She then reluctant grew, and thought it hard,
To sit and ponder o'er an ugly card;
Rather the nut-tree shade the nymph preferr'd,
Pleased with the pensive gloom and evening bird;
Thither, from company retired, she took
The silent walk, or read the fav'rite book.

The father's letter, sudden, short, and kind,
Awaked her wonder, and disturb'd her mind;
She found new dreams upon her fancy seize,
Wild roving thoughts and endless reveries:
The parting came;—and when the Aunt perceived
The tears of Sybil, and how much she grieved—
To love for her that tender grief she laid,
That various, soft, contending passions made.

When Sybil rested in her father's arms,
His pride exulted in a daughter's charms;

A maid accomplish'd he was pleased to find,
Nor seem'd the form more lovely than the mind:
But when the fit of pride and fondness fled,
He saw his judgment by his hopes misled;
High were the lady's spirits, far more free
Her mode of speaking than a maid's should be;
Too much, as Jonas thought, she seem'd to know,
And all her knowledge was disposed to show;
" Too gay her dress, like theirs who idly dote
" On a young coxcomb, or a coxcomb's coat;
" In foolish spirits when our friends appear.
" And vainly grave when not a man is near."

Thus Jonas, adding to his sorrow blame,
And terms disdainful to a Sister's name:—
" The sinful wretch has by her arts defiled
" The ductile spirit of my darling child."

" The maid is virtuous," said the dame—Quoth he,
" Let her give proof, by acting virtuously:
" Is it in gaping when the Elders pray?
" In reading nonsense half a summer's day?
" In those mock forms that she delights to trace,
" Or her loud laughs in Hezekiah's face?
" She—O Susanna!—to the world belongs;
" She loves the follies of its idle throngs,
" And reads soft tales of love, and sings love's
soft'ning songs.
" But, as our friend is yet delay'd in town,
" We must prepare her till the Youth comes down:
" You shall advise the maiden; I will threat;
" Her fears and hopes may yield us comfort yet."

Now the grave father took the lass aside,
Demanding sternly, "Wilt thou be a bride?"
She answer'd, calling up an air sedate,
"I have not vow'd against the holy state."

"No folly, Sybil," said the parent; "know
"What to their parents virtuous maidens owe:
"A worthy, wealthy youth, whom I approve,
"Must thou prepare to honour and to love.
"Formal to thee his air and dress may seem,
"But the good youth is worthy of esteem:
"Shouldst thou with rudeness treat him; of disdain
"Should he with justice or of slight complain,
"Or of one taunting speech give certain proof,
"Girl! I reject thee from my sober roof."

"My aunt," said Sybil, "will with pride protect
"One whom a father can for this reject;
"Nor shall a formal, rigid, soul-less boy
"My manners alter, or my views destroy!"

Jonas then lifted up his hands on high,
And, utt'ring something 'twixt a groan and sigh,
Left the determined maid, her doubtful mother by.

"Hear me," she said; "incline thy heart, my child,
"And fix thy fancy on a man so mild:
"Thy father, Sybil, never could be moved
"By one who loved him, or by one he loved.
"Union like ours is but a bargain made
"By slave and tyrant—he will be obey'd;

" Then calls the quiet, comfort—but thy Youth
" Is mild by nature, and as frank as truth."

" But will he love?" said Sybil; " I am told
" That these mild creatures are by nature cold."

" Alas!" the matron answer'd, " much I dread
" That dangerous love by which the young are led!
" That love is earthy; you the creature prize,
" And trust your feelings and believe your eyes:
" Can eyes and feelings inward worth descry?
" No! my fair daughter, on our choice rely!
" Your love, like that display'd upon the stage,
" Indulged is folly, and opposed is rage;—
" More prudent love our sober couples show,
" All that to mortal beings, mortals owe;
" All flesh is grass—before you give a heart,
" Remember, Sybil, that in death you part;
" And should your husband die before your love,
" What needless anguish must a widow prove!
" No! my fair child, let all such visions cease;
" Yield but esteem, and only try for peace."

" I must be loved," said Sybil; " I must see
" The man in terrors who aspires to me;
" At my forbidding frown his heart must ache,
" His tongue must falter, and his frame must shake:
" And if I grant him at my feet to kneel,
" What trembling, fearful pleasure must he feel;
" Nay, such the raptures that my smiles inspire,
" That reason's self must for a time retire."

" Alas! for good *Josiah*," said the dame,
" These wicked thoughts would fill his soul with shame;
" He kneel and tremble at a thing of dust!
" He cannot, child:" — the Child replied, " He must."

They ceased: the matron left her with a frown;
So Jonas met her when the Youth came down:
" Behold," said he, " thy future spouse attends;
" Receive him, daughter, as the best of friends;
" Observe, respect him—humble be each word,
" That welcomes home thy husband and thy lord."

Forewarn'd, thought Sybil, with a bitter smile,
I shall prepare my manner and my style.

Ere yet Josiah enter'd on his task,
The father met him—" Deign to wear a mask
" A few dull days, Josiah, — but a few —
" It is our duty, and the sex's due;
" I wore it once, and every grateful wife
" Repays it with obedience through her life:
" Have no regard to Sybil's dress, have none
" To her pert language, to her flippant tone;
" Henceforward thou shalt rule unquestion'd and alone;
" And she thy pleasure in thy looks shall seek —
" How she shall dress, and whether she may speak.

A sober smile return'd the Youth, and said,
" Can I cause fear, who am myself afraid?"

Sybil, meantime, sat thoughtful in her room,
And often wonder'd—"Will the creature come?
"Nothing shall tempt, shall force me to bestow
"My hand upon him,—yet I wish to know."

The door unclosed, and she beheld her sire
Lead in the Youth, then hasten to retire;
"Daughter, my friend—my daughter, friend!"—
he cried,
And gave a meaning look, and stepp'd aside:
That look contain'd a mingled threat and prayer,
"Do take him, child—offend him, if you dare."

The couple gazed—were silent, and the maid
Look'd in his face, to make the man afraid;
The man, unmoved, upon the maiden cast
A steady view—so salutation pass'd:
But in this instant Sybil's eye had seen
The tall fair person, and the still staid mien;
The glow that temp'rance o'er the cheek had spread,
Where the soft down half veil'd the purest red;
And the serene deportment that proclaim'd
A heart unspotted, and a life unblamed:
But then with these she saw attire too plain,
The pale brown coat, though worn without a stain;
The formal air, and something of the pride
That indicates the wealth it seems to hide;
And looks that were not, she conceived, exempt
From a proud pity, or a sly contempt.

Josiah's eyes had their employment too,
Engaged and soften'd by so bright a view;

A fair and meaning face, an eye of fire,
That check'd the bold, and made the free retire:
But then with these he mark'd the studied dress
And lofty air, that scorn or pride express;
With that insidious look, that seem'd to hide
In an affected smile the scorn and pride;
And if his mind the virgin's meaning caught,
He saw a foe with treacherous purpose fraught—
Captive the heart to take, and to reject it, caught.

Silent they sate—thought Sybil, that he seeks
Something, no doubt; I wonder if he speaks:
Scarcely she wonder'd, when these accents fell
Slow in her ear—"Fair maiden, art thou well?"
"Art thou physician?" she replied; "my hand,
"My pulse, at least, shall be at thy command."

She said—and saw, surprised, Josiah kneel,
And gave his lips the offer'd pulse to feel;
The rosy colour rising in her cheek,
Seem'd that surprise unmix'd with wrath to speak;
Then sternness she assumed, and—"Doctor, tell,
"Thy words cannot alarm me—am I well?"

"Thou art," said he; "and yet thy dress so light,
"I do conceive, some danger must excite:"
"In whom?" said Sybil, with a look demure:
"In more," said he, "than I expect to cure;—
"I, in thy light luxuriant robe, behold
"Want and excess, abounding and yet cold;
"Here needed, there display'd, in many a wanton
fold:

" Both health and beauty, learned authors show,
" From a just medium in our clothing flow."

" Proceed, good doctor; if so great my need,
" What is thy fee? Good doctor! pray proceed."

" Large is my fee, fair lady, but I take
" None till some progress in my cure I make:
" Thou hast disease, fair maiden; thou art vain;
" Within that face sit insult and disdain;
" Thou art enamour'd of thyself; my art
" Can see the naughty malice of thy heart:
" With a strong pleasure would thy bosom move,
" Were I to own thy power, and ask thy love;
" And such thy beauty, damsel, that I might,
" But for thy pride, feel danger in thy sight,
" And lose my present peace in dreams of vain
delight."

" And can thy patients," said the nymph, " endure
" Physic like this? and will it work a cure?"

" Such is my hope, fair damsel; thou, I find,
" Hast the true tokens of a noble mind;
" But the world wins thee, Sybil, and thy joys
" Are placed in trifles, fashions, follies, toys;
" Thou hast sought pleasure in the world around,
" That in thine own pure bosom should be found:
" Did all that world admire thee, praise and love,
" Could it the least of nature's pains remove?
" Could it for errors, follies, sins atone,
" Or give thee comfort, thoughtful and alone?

" It has, believe me, maid, no power to charm
" Thy soul from sorrow, or thy flesh from harm:
" Turn then, fair creature, from a world of sin,
" And seek the jewel happiness within."

" Speak'st thou at meeting?" said the nymph
" thy speech
" Is that of mortal very prone to teach;
" But wouldst thou, doctor, from the patient learn
" Thine own disease?—The cure is thy concern."

" Yea, with good will."—" Then know 't is thy
complaint,
" That, for a sinner, thou 'rt too much a saint;
" Hast too much show of the sedate and pure,
" And without cause art formal and demure:
" This makes a man unsocial, unpolite;
" Odious when wrong, and insolent if right.
" Thou may'st be good, but why should goodness be
" Wrapt in a garb of such formality?
" Thy person well might please a damsel's eye,
" In decent habit with a scarlet dye;
" But, jest apart—what virtue canst thou trace
" In that broad brim that hides thy sober face?
" Does that long-skirted drab, that over-nice
" And formal clothing, prove a scorn of vice?
" Then for thine accent—what in sound can be
" So void of grace as dull monotony?
" Love has a thousand varied notes to move
" The human heart:—thou may'st not speak of love,
" Till thou hast cast thy formal ways aside,
" And those becoming youth and nature tried:

" Not till exterior freedom, spirit, ease,
" Prove it thy study and delight to please;
" Not till these follies meet thy just disdain,
" While yet thy virtues and thy worth remain."

" This is severe!—Oh! maiden, wilt not thou
" Something for habits, manners, modes, allow?"—
" Yes! but allowing much, I much require,
" In my behalf, for manners, modes, attire!"

" True, lovely Sybil; and, this point agreed,
" Let me to those of greater weight proceed:
" Thy father!"—" Nay," she quickly interposed,
" Good doctor, here our conference is closed!"

Then left the Youth, who, lost in his retreat,
Pass'd the good matron on her garden-seat;
His looks were troubled, and his air, once mild
And calm, was hurried:—" My audacious child!"
Exclaim'd the dame, " I read what she has done
" In thy displeasure—Ah! the thoughtless one:
" But yet, Josiah, to my stern good man
" Speak of the maid as mildly as you can:
" Can you not seem to woo a little while
" The daughter's will, the father to beguile?
" So that his wrath in time may wear away;
" Will you preserve our peace, Josiah? say."

" Yes! my good neighbour," said the gentle youth,
" Rely securely on my care and truth;
" And should thy comfort with my efforts cease;
" And only then,—perpetual is thy peace."

The dame had doubts: she well his virtues knew,
His deeds were friendly, and his words were true;
" But to address this vixen is a task
" He is ashamed to take, and I to ask."
Soon as the father from Josiah learn'd
What pass'd with Sybil, he the truth discern'd.
" He loves," the man exclaim'd, " he loves, 't is plain,
" The thoughtless girl, and shall he love in vain?
" She may be stubborn, but she shall be tried,
" Born as she is of wilfulness and pride."

With anger fraught, but willing to persuade,
The wrathful father met the smiling maid:
" Sybil," said he, " I long, and yet I dread
" To know thy conduct—hath Josiah fled?
" And, grieved and fretted by thy scornful air,
" For his lost peace, betaken him to prayer?
" Couldst thou his pure and modest mind distress,
" By vile remarks upon his speech, address,
" Attire, and voice?"—" All this I must confess."—
" Unhappy child! what labour will it cost
" To win him back!"—" I do not think him lost."—
" Courts he then, (trifler!) insult and disdain?"—
" No: but from these he courts me to refrain. —
" Then hear me, Sybil—should Josiah leave
" Thy father's house?"—" My father's child would grieve:'
" That is of grace, and if he come again
" To speak of love?"—" I might from grief refrain."—

"Then wilt thou, daughter, our design embrace?"—
"Can I resist it, if it be of grace?"—
"Dear child! in three plain words thy mind express—
"Wilt thou have this good youth?"—"Dear father! yes." (1)

(1) ["The Frank Courtship" is rather in the merry vein; and contains even less than Mr. Crabbe's usual moderate allowance of incident. The whole of the story is, that the daughter of a rigid Quaker, having been educated from home, conceives a slight prejudice against the ungallant manners of the sect, and is prepared to be very contemptuous and uncomplying when her father proposes a sober youth of the persuasion for a husband; but is so much struck with the beauty of his person, and the cheerful reasonableness of his deportment, at their first interview, that she instantly yields her consent. There is an excellent description of the father, and the unbending elders of his tribe; and some fine traits of natural coquetry. — JEFFREY.]

TALE VII.

THE WIDOW'S TALE.

Ah me! for aught that I could ever read,
Or ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But either it was different in blood,
Or else misgrafted in respect of years,
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends
Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

Oh! thou didst then ne'er love so heartily,
If thou remembrest not the slightest folly
That ever love did make thee run into. — *As You Like It.*

Cry the man mercy; love him, take his offer. — *As You Like It*

TALE VII.

THE WIDOW'S TALE.

To Farmer *Moss*, in Langar Vale, came down,
His only Daughter, from her school in town;
A tender, timid maid! who knew not how
To pass a pig-sty, or to face a cow:
Smiling she came, with petty talents graced,
A fair complexion, and a slender waist.

Used to spare meals, disposed in manner pure,
Her father's kitchen she could ill endure:
Where by the steaming beef he hungry sat,
And laid at once a pound upon his plate;
Hot from the field, her eager brother seized
An equal part, and hunger's rage appeased;
The air surcharged with moisture, flagg'd around,
And the offended damsel sigh'd and frown'd;
The swelling fat in lumps conglomerate laid,
And fancy's sickness seized the loathing maid:
But when the men beside their station took,
The maidens with them, and with these the cook:

When one huge wooden bowl before them stood,
Fill'd with huge balls of farinaceous food;
With bacon, mass saline, where never lean
Beneath the brown and bristly rind was seen;
When from a single horn the party drew
Their copious draughts of heavy ale and new;
When the coarse cloth she saw, with many a stain,
Soil'd by rude hinds who cut and came again —
She could not breathe; but with a heavy sigh,
Rein'd the fair neck, and shut th' offended eye;
She minced the sanguine flesh in frustums fine,
And wonder'd much to see the creatures dine:
When she resolved her father's heart to move,
If hearts of farmers were alive to love.

She now entreated by herself to sit
In the small parlour, if papa thought fit,
And there to dine, to read, to work alone: —
"No!" said the Farmer, in an angry tone; [pride
"These are your school-taught airs; your mother's
"Would send you there; but I am now your
"Arise betimes, our early meal prepare, [guide. —
"And, this despatch'd, let business be your care;
"Look to the lasses, let there not be one
"Who lacks attention, till her tasks be done;
"In every household work your portion take,
"And what you make not, see that others make:
"At leisure times attend the wheel, and see
"The whit'ning web be sprinkled on the lea;
"When thus employ'd, should our young neighbour
view,
'A useful lass, — you may have more to do."

Dreadful were these commands; but worse than these
The parting hint — a Farmer could not please:
'T is true she had without abhorrence seen
Young *Harry Carr*, when he was smart and clean;
But, to be married — be a farmer's wife —
A slave! a drudge! — she could not, for her life.

With swimming eyes the fretful nymph withdrew,
And, deeply sighing, to her chamber flew;
There on her knees, to Heaven she grieving pray'd
For change of prospect to a tortured maid.

Harry, a youth whose late-departed sire
Had left him all industrious men require,
Saw the pale Beauty, — and her shape and air
Engaged him much, and yet he must forbear:
"For my small farm, what can the damsel do?"
He said, — then stopp'd to take another view:
"Pity so sweet a lass will nothing learn
"Of household cares, — for what can beauty earn
"By those small arts which they at school attain,
"That keep them useless, and yet make them vain?"

This luckless Damsel look'd the village round,
To find a friend, and one was quickly found:
A pensive Widow, — whose mild air and dress
Pleased the sad nymph, who wish'd her soul's distress
To one so seeming kind, confiding, to confess.

"What Lady that?" the anxious lass inquired,
Who then beheld the one she most admired:

" Here," said the Brother, " are no ladies seen —
" That is a widow dwelling on the Green;
" A dainty dame, who can but barely live
" On her poor pittance, yet contrives to give;
" She happier days has known, but seems at ease,
" And you may call her Lady, if you please:
" But if you wish, good sister, to improve,
" You shall see twenty better worth your love."

These *Nancy* met; but, spite of all they taught,
This useless Widow was the one she sought:
The father growl'd; but said he knew no harm
In such connexion that could give alarm;
" And if we thwart the trifler in her course,
" 'Tis odds against us she will take a worse."

Then met the friends; the Widow heard the sigh
That ask'd at once compassion and reply: —
" Would you, my child, converse with one so poor,
" Yours were the kindness — yonder is my door:
" And, save the time that we in public pray,
" From that poor cottage I but rarely stray.

There went the Nymph, and made her strong com-
Painting her wo as injured feeling paints. [plaints,

" Oh, dearest friend! do think how one must feel,
" Shock'd all day long, and sicken'd every meal;
" Could you behold our kitchen (and to you
" A scene so shocking must indeed be new),
" A mind like yours, with true refinement graced,
" Would let no vulgar scenes pollute your taste:

" And yet, in truth, from such a polish'd mind
" All base ideas must resistance find,
" And sordid pictures from the fancy pass,
" As the breath startles from the polish'd glass.

" Here you enjoy a sweet romantic scene,
" Without so pleasant, and within so clean;
" These twining jess'mines, what delicious gloom
" And soothing fragrance yield they to the room!
" What lovely garden! there you oft retire,
" And tales of wo and tenderness admire:
" In that neat case your books, in order placed,
" Soothe the full soul, and charm the cultured taste;
" And thus, while all about you wears a charm,
" How must you scorn the Farmer and the Farm!"

The Widow smiled, and "Know you not," said she,
" How much these farmers scorn or pity me;
" Who see what you admire, and laugh at all they see?
" True, their opinion alters not my fate,
" By falsely judging of an humble state:
" This garden you with such delight behold,
" Tempts not a feeble dame who dreads the cold;
" These plants, which please so well your livelier sense,
" To mine but little of their sweets dispense:
" Books soon are painful to my failing sight,
" And oftener read from duty than delight;
" (Yet let me own, that I can sometimes find
" Both joy and duty in the act combined;)
" But view me rightly, you will see no more
" Than a poor female, willing to be poor;

" Happy indeed, but not in books nor flowers,
" Not in fair dreams, indulged in earlier hours,
" Of never-tasted joys; — such visions shun,
" My youthful friend, nor scorn the Farmer's Son."

" Nay," said the Damsel, nothing pleased to see
A Friend's advice could like a Father's be,
" Bless'd in your cottage, you must surely smile
" At those who live in our detested style:
" To my Lucinda's sympathising heart
" Could I my prospects and my griefs impart,
" She would console me; but I dare not show
" Ills that would wound her tender soul to know:
" And I confess, it shocks my pride to tell
" The secrets of the prison where I dwell;
" For that dear maiden would be shock'd to feel
" The secrets I should shudder to reveal;
" When told her friend was by a parent ask'd,
" 'Fed you the swine?'—Good heaven! how I am
task'd!— [grief
" What! can you smile? Ah! smile not at the
" That woos your pity and demands relief."

" Trifles, my love: you take a false alarm;
" Think, I beseech you, better of the Farm:
" Duties in every state demand your care,
" And light are those that will require it there.
" Fix on the Youth a favouring eye, and these,
" To him pertaining, or as his, will please."

" What words," the Lass replied, " offend my ear!
" Try you my patience? Can you be sincere?

" And am I told a willing hand to give
" To a rude farmer, and with rustics live?
" Far other fate was yours; — some gentle youth
" Admired your beauty, and avow'd his truth;
" The power of love prevail'd, and freely both
" Gave the fond heart, and pledged the binding oath;
" And then the rival's plot, the parent's power,
" And jealous fears, drew on the happy hour:
" Ah! let not memory lose the blissful view,
" But fairly show what Love has done for you."

" Agreed, my daughter; what my heart has known
" Of Love's strange power, shall be with frankness shown:
" But let me warn you, that experience finds
" Few of the scenes that lively hope designs." —

" Mysterious all," said Nancy; " you, I know,
" Have suffer'd much; now deign the grief to show;—
" I am your friend, and so prepare my heart
" In all your sorrows to receive a part."

The Widow answer'd: " I had once, like you,
" Such thoughts of love; no dream is more untrue;
" You judge it fated, and decreed to dwell
" In youthful hearts, which nothing can expel,
" A passion doom'd to reign, and irresistible.
" The struggling mind, when once subdued, in vain
" Rejects the fury or defies the pain;
" The strongest reason fails the flame t' allay,
" And resolution droops and faints away:

" Hence, when the destined lovers meet, they prove
" At once the force of this all-powerful love;
" Each from that period feels the mutual smart,
" Nor seeks to cure it—heart is changed for heart;
" Nor is there peace till they delighted stand,
" And, at the altar—hand is join'd to hand.

" Alas! my child, there are who, dreaming so,
" Waste their fresh youth, and waking feel the wo;
" There is no spirit sent the heart to move
" With such prevailing and alarming love;
" Passion to reason will submit—or why
" Should wealthy maids the poorest swains deny?
" Or how could classes and degrees create
" The slightest bar to such resistless fate?
" Yet high and low, you see, forbear to mix;
" No beggars' eyes the heart of kings transfix;
" And who but am'rous peers or nobles sigh,
" When titled beauties pass triumphant by?
" For reason wakes, proud wishes to reprove;
" You cannot hope, and therefore dare not love:
" All would be safe, did we at first inquire—
" 'Does reason sanction what our hearts desire?'
" But quitting precept, let example show
" What joys from Love uncheck'd by prudence flow.

" A Youth, my father in his office placed,
" Of humble fortune, but with sense and taste;
" But he was thin and pale, had downcast looks;
" He studied much, and pored upon his books:
" Confused he was when seen, and, when he saw
" Me or my sisters, would in haste withdraw;

" And had this youth departed with the year,
" His loss had cost us neither sigh nor tear.

" But with my father still the Youth remain'd,
" And more reward and kinder notice gain'd:
" He often, reading, to the garden stray'd,
" Where I by books or musing was delay'd;
" This to discourse in summer evenings led,
" Of these same evenings, or of what we read:
" On such occasions we were much alone;
" But, save the look, the manner, and the tone,
" (These might have meaning,) all that we discuss'd
" We could with pleasure to a parent trust.

" At length 't was friendship — and, my Friend and I
" Said we were happy, and began to sigh:
" My sisters first, and then my father, found
" That we were wandering o'er enchanted ground;
" But he had troubles in his own affairs,
" And would not bear addition to his cares:
" With pity moved, yet angry, ' Child,' said he,
" ' Will you embrace contempt and beggary?
" ' Can you endure to see each other cursed
" ' By want, of every human wo the worst?
" ' Warring for ever with distress, in dread
" ' Either of begging or of wanting bread;
" ' While poverty, with unrelenting force,
" ' Will your own offspring from your love divorce;
" ' They, through your folly, must be doom'd to pine,
" ' And you deplore your passion, or resign;

" ' For if it die, what good will then remain?
" ' And if it live, it doubles every pain.' "

" But you were true," exclaim'd the Lass, " and fled
" The tyrant's power who fill'd your soul with dread?"
" But," said the smiling Friend, " he fill'd my mouth with bread:
" And in what other place that bread to gain
" We long consider'd, and we sought in vain:
" This was my twentieth year,—at thirty-five
" Our hope was fainter, yet our love alive;
" So many years in anxious doubt had pass'd."
" Then," said the Damsel, " you were bless'd at last?"
A smile again adorn'd the Widow's face,
But soon a starting tear usurp'd its place.

" Slow pass'd the heavy years, and each had more
" Pains and vexations than the years before.
" My father fail'd; his family was rent,
" And to new states his grieving daughters sent;
" Each to more thriving kindred found a way,
" Guests without welcome—servants without pay
" Our parting hour was grievous; still I feel
" The sad, sweet converse at our final meal;
" Our father then reveal'd his former fears,
" Cause of his sternness, and then join'd our tears
" Kindly he strove our feelings to repress,
" But died, and left us heirs to his distress.

" The rich, as humble friends, my sisters chose;
" I with a wealthy widow sought repose;
" Who with a chilling frown her friend received,
" Bade me rejoice, and wonder'd that I grieved:
" In vain my anxious lover tried his skill
" To rise in life, he was dependent still;
" We met in grief, nor can I paint the fears
" Of these unhappy, troubled, trying years:
" Our dying hopes and stronger fears between,
" We felt no season peaceful or serene;
" Our fleeting joys, like meteors in the night,
" Shone on our gloom with inauspicious light;
" And then domestic sorrows, till the mind,
" Worn with distresses, to despair inclined;
" Add too the ill that from the passion flows,
" When its contemptuous frown the world bestows,
" The peevish spirit caused by long delay,
" When, being gloomy, we contemn the gay,
" When, being wretched, we incline to hate
" And censure others in a happier state;
" Yet loving still, and still compell'd to move
" In the sad labyrinth of lingering love:
" While you, exempt from want, despair, alarm,
" May wed—oh! take the Farmer and the Farm."

" Nay," said the Nymph, " joy smiled on you at last?"

" Smiled for a moment," she replied, " and pass'd:
" My lover still the same dull means pursued,
" Assistant call'd, but kept in servitude;
" His spirits wearied in the prime of life,
" By fears and wishes in eternal strife;

" At length he urged impatient—' Now consent;
" ' With thee united, Fortune may relent.'
" I paused, consenting; but a Friend arose,
" Pleased a fair view, though distant, to disclose;
" From the rough ocean we beheld a gleam
" Of joy, as transient as the joys we dream;
" By lying hopes deceived, my friend retired,
" And sail'd — was wounded — reach'd us — and expired!
" You shall behold his grave; and when I die,
" There — but 't is folly — I request to lie."

" Thus," said the Lass, " to joy you bade adieu!
" But how a widow? — that cannot be true:
" Or was it force, in some unhappy hour,
" That placed you, grieving, in a tyrant's power?"

" Force, my young friend, when forty years are fled,
" Is what a woman seldom has to dread;
" She needs no brazen locks nor guarding walls,
" And seldom comes a lover though she calls:
" Yet, moved by fancy, one approved my face,
" Though time and tears had wrought it much disgrace.

" The man I married was sedate and meek,
" And spoke of love as men in earnest speak;
" Poor as I was, he ceaseless sought, for years,
" A heart in sorrow and a face in tears:
' That heart I gave not; and 'twas long before
" I gave attention, and then nothing more;

" But in my breast some grateful feeling rose,
" For one whose love so sad a subject chose;
" Till long delaying, fearing to repent,
" But grateful still, I gave a cold assent.

" Thus we were wed; no fault had I to find,
" And he but one; my heart could not be kind:
" Alas! of every early hope bereft,
" There was no fondness in my bosom left;
" So had I told him, but had told in vain,
" He lived but to indulge me and complain:
" His was this cottage; he inclosed this ground,
" And planted all these blooming shrubs around;
" He to my room these curious trifles brought,
" And with assiduous love my pleasure sought;
" He lived to please me, and I ofttimes strove,
" Smiling, to thank his unrequited love:
" 'Teach me,' he cried, 'that pensive mind to ease,
" 'For all my pleasure is the hope to please.'

" Serene, though heavy, were the days we spent,
" Yet kind each word, and gen'rous each intent;
" But his dejection lessen'd every day,
" And to a placid kindness died away:
" In tranquil ease we pass'd our latter years,
" By griefs untroubled, unassail'd by fears.

" Let not romantic views your bosom sway,
" Yield to your duties, and their call obey:
" Fly not a Youth, frank, honest, and sincere;
" Observe his merits, and his passion hear!

" 'Tis true, no hero, but a farmer sues—
" Slow in his speech, but worthy in his views;
" With him you cannot that affliction prove,
" That rends the bosom of the poor, in love:
" Health, comfort, competence, and cheerful days,
" Your friends' approval, and your father's praise,
" Will crown the deed, and you escape *their* fate
" Who plan so wildly, and are wise too late."

The Damsel heard; at first th' advice was strange,
Yet wrought a happy, nay, a speedy change:
" I have no care," she said, when next they met,
" But one may wonder, he is silent yet;
" He looks around him with his usual stare,
" And utters nothing—not that I shall care."

This pettish humour pleased th experienced Friend—
None need despair, whose silence can offend;
" Should I," resumed the thoughtful Lass, "consent
" To hear the man, the man may now repent:
" Think you my sighs shall call him from the plough,
" Or give one hint, that 'You may woo me now?'"

" Persist, my love," replied the Friend, " and gain
" A parent's praise, *that* cannot be in vain."

The father saw the change, but not the cause,
And gave the alter'd maid his fond applause;
The coarser manners she in part removed,
In part endured, improving and improved;

She spoke of household works, she rose betimes,
And said neglect and indolence were crimes;
The various duties of their life she weigh'd,
And strict attention to her dairy paid;
The names of servants now familiar grew,
And fair Lucinda's from her mind withdrew;
As prudent travellers for their ease assume
Their modes and language to whose lands they come:
So to the Farmer this fair Lass inclined,
Gave to the business of the Farm her mind;
To useful arts she turn'd her hand and eye;
And by her manners told him—"You may try."

Th' observing Lover more attention paid,
With growing pleasure, to the alter'd maid;
He fear'd to lose her, and began to see
That a slim beauty might a helpmate be:
'Twixt hope and fear he now the lass address'd,
And in his Sunday robe his love express'd:
She felt no chilling dread, no thrilling joy,
Nor was too quickly kind, too slowly coy;
But still she lent an unreluctant ear
To all the rural business of the year;
Till love's strong hopes endured no more delay,
And Harry ask'd, and Nancy named the day.

"A happy change! my Boy," the father cried:
"How lost your sister all her school-day pride?"
The Youth replied, "It is the Widow's deed;
"The cure is perfect, and was wrought with speed."—

" And comes there, Boy, this benefit of books,
" Of that smart dress, and of those dainty looks?
" We must be kind—some offerings from the Farm
" To the White Cot will speak our feelings warm;
" Will show that people, when they know the fact,
" Where they have judged severely, can retract.
" Oft have I smiled, when I beheld her pass
" With cautious step, as if she hurt the grass;
" Where, if a snail's retreat she chanced to storm,
" She look'd as begging pardon of the worm;
" And what, said I, still laughing at the view,
" Have these weak creatures in the world to do?
" But some are made for action, some to speak;
" And, while she looks so pitiful and meek,
" Her words are weighty, though her nerves are weak."

Soon told the village-bells the rite was done,
That join'd the school-bred Miss and Farmer's Son;
Her former habits some slight scandal raised,
But real worth was soon perceived and praised;
She, her neat taste imparted to the Farm,
And he, th' improving skill and vigorous arm. (1)

(1) ['The Widow's Tale' is rather of the facetious order. It contains the history of a farmer's daughter, who comes home from boarding-school a great deal too fine to tolerate the gross habits, or submit to the filthy drudgery, of her father's house; but is induced, by the warning history and sensible exhortations of a neighbouring Widow, in whom she expected to find a sentimental companion, to reconcile herself to all those abominations, and marry a jolly young farmer in the neighbourhood. The account of her horrors, on first coming down, is in Mr. Crabbe's best style of Dutch painting—a little coarse, and needlessly minute—but perfectly true, and marvellously coloured.—JEFFREY.]

TALE VIII.

THE MOTHER.

What though you have beauty,
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless? — *As You Like It.*

I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed. — *As You Like It.*

Wilt thou love such a woman? What! to make thee an instrument, and play false strains upon thee! — Not to be endured. — *As You Like It.*

Your son,
As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know
Her estimation hence. *All 's Well that Ends Well.*

Be this sweet Helen's knell;
He left a wife whose words all ears took captive,
Whose dear perfections hearts that scorn'd to serve
Humbly call'd Mistress. *All 's Well that Ends Well.*

TALE VIII.

THE MOTHER.

THERE was a worthy, but a simple Pair,
Who nursed a Daughter, fairest of the fair:
Sons they had lost, and she alone remain'd,
Heir to the kindness they had all obtain'd;
Heir to the fortune they design'd for all,
Nor had th' allotted portion then been small;
But now, by fate enrich'd with beauty rare,
They watch'd their treasure with peculiar care:
The fairest features they could early trace,
And, blind with love, saw merit in her face—
Saw virtue, wisdom, dignity, and grace;
And *Dorothea*, from her infant years,
Gain'd all her wishes from their pride or fears:
She wrote a billet, and a novel read,
And with her fame her vanity was fed;
Each word, each look, each action was a cause
For flattering wonder and for fond applause;
She rode or danced, and ever glanced around,
Seeking for praise, and smiling when she found
The yielding pair to her petitions gave
An humble friend to be a civil slave;

Who for a poor support herself resign'd
To the base toil of a dependent mind:
By nature cold, our Heiress stoop'd to art,
To gain the credit of a tender heart.
Hence at her door must suppliant paupers stand,
To bless the bounty of her beauteous hand:
And now, her education all complete,
She talk'd of virtuous love and union sweet;
She was indeed by no soft passion moved,
But wish'd, with all her soul, to be beloved.
Here, on the favour'd beauty Fortune smiled;
Her chosen Husband was a man so mild,
So humbly temper'd, so intent to please,
It quite distress'd her to remain at ease,
Without a cause to sigh, without pretence to tease:
She tried his patience in a thousand modes,
And tired it not upon the roughest roads.
Pleasure she sought, and, disappointed, sigh'd
For joys, she said, "to her alone denied;"
And she was "sure her parents, if alive,
"Would many comforts for their child contrive:"
The gentle Husband bade her name him one;
"No—that," she answer'd, "should for her be done;
"How could she say what pleasures were around?
"But she was certain many might be found."—
"Would she some sea-port, Weymouth, Scarborough,
grace?"
"He knew she hated every watering-place:"—
"The town?"—"What! now 'twas empty, joyless,
dull?"
—"In winter?"—"No; she liked it worse when
full."

She talk'd of building—"Would she plan a room?"—
"No! she could live, as he desired, in gloom:"
"Call then our friends and neighbours:"—"He might call,
"And they might come and fill his ugly hall;
"A noisy vulgar set, he knew she scorn'd them all:"—
"Then might their two dear girls the time employ,
"And their improvement yield a solid joy;"—
"Solid indeed! and heavy—oh! the bliss
"Of teaching letters to a lisping miss!"—
"My dear, my gentle Dorothea, say,
"Can I oblige you?"—"You may go away."

Twelve heavy years this patient soul sustain'd
This wasp's attacks, and then her praise obtain'd,
Graved on a marble tomb, where he at peace remain'd.

Two daughters wept their loss; the one a child
With a plain face, strong sense, and temper mild,
Who keenly felt the Mother's angry taunt,
"Thou art the image of thy pious Aunt:"
Long time had *Lucy* wept her slighted face,
And then began to smile at her disgrace.
Her father's sister, who the world had seen
Near sixty years when Lucy saw sixteen,
Begg'd the plain girl: the gracious Mother smiled,
And freely gave her grieved but passive child;
And with her elder-born, the beauty blest,
This parent rested, if such minds can rest:
No miss her waxen babe could so admire,
Nurse with such care, or with such pride attire;

They were companions meet, with equal mind,
Bless'd with one love, and to one point inclined;
Beauty to keep, adorn, increase, and guard,
Was their sole care, and had its full reward:
In rising splendor with the one it reign'd,
And in the other was by care sustain'd,
The daughter's charms increased, the parent's yet remain'd.

Leave we these ladies to their daily care,
To see how meekness and discretion fare:—
A village maid, unvex'd by want or love,
Could not with more delight than Lucy move;
The village-lark, high mounted in the spring,
Could not with purer joy than Lucy sing;
Her cares all light, her pleasures all sincere,
Her duty joy, and her companion dear;
In tender friendship and in true respect
Lived Aunt and Niece, no flattery, no neglect —
They read, walk'd, visited — together pray'd,
Together slept the matron and the maid:
There was such goodness, such pure nature seen
In Lucy's looks, a manner so serene;
Such harmony in motion, speech, and air,
That without fairness she was more than fair,
Had more than beauty in each speaking grace,
That lent their cloudless glory to the face;
Where mild good sense in placid looks were shown,
And felt in every bosom but her own.
The one presiding feature in her mind,
Was the pure meekness of a will resign'd;

A tender spirit, freed from all pretence
Of wit, and pleased in mild benevolence;
Blest in protecting fondness she reposed,
With every wish indulged though undisclosed;
But Love, like zephyr on the limpid lake,
Was now the bosom of the maid to shake,
And in that gentle mind a gentle strife to make.

Among their chosen friends, a favour'd few
The aunt and niece a youthful Rector knew;
Who, though a younger brother, might address
A younger sister, fearless of success:
His friends, a lofty race, their native pride
At first display'd, and their assent denied;
But, pleased such virtues and such love to trace,
They own'd she would adorn the loftiest race.
The Aunt, a mother's caution to supply,
Had watch'd the youthful priest with jealous eye;
And, anxious for her charge, had view'd unseen
The cautious life that keeps the conscience clean:
In all she found him all she wish'd to find,
With slight exception of a lofty mind:
A certain manner that express'd desire,
To be received as brother to the 'Squire.
Lucy's meek eye had beam'd with many a tear,
Lucy's soft heart had beat with many a fear,
Before he told (although his looks, she thought,
Had oft confess'd) that he her favour sought:
But when he kneel'd, (she wish'd him not to kneel,)
And spoke the fears and hopes that lovers feel;

When too the prudent aunt herself confess'd,
Her wishes on the gentle youth would rest;
The maiden's eye with tender passion beam'd,
She dwelt with fondness on the life she schemed;
The household cares, the soft and lasting ties
Of love, with all his binding charities;
Their village taught, consoled, assisted, fed,
Till the young zealot tears of pleasure shed.

But would her Mother? Ah! she fear'd it wrong
To have indulged these forward hopes so long;
Her mother loved, but was not used to grant
Favours so freely as her gentle aunt. —
Her gentle aunt, with smiles that angels wear,
Dispell'd her Lucy's apprehensive tear:
Her prudent foresight the request had made
To one whom none could govern, few persuade;
She doubted much if one in earnest woo'd
A girl with not a single charm endued;
The Sister's nobler views she then declared,
And what small sum for Lucy could be spared;
"If more than this the foolish priest requires,
"Tell him," she wrote, "to check his vain desires."
At length, with many a cold expression mix'd,
With many a sneer on girls so fondly fix'd,
There came a promise — should they not repent,
But take with grateful minds the portion meant,
And wait the Sister's day—the Mother might consent.

And here, might pitying hope o'er truth prevail,
Or love o'er fortune, we would end our tale·

For who more blest than youthful pair removed
From fear of want—by mutual friends approved—
Short time to wait, and in that time to live
With all the pleasures hope and fancy give;
Their equal passion raised on just esteem,
When reason sanctions all that love can dream?

Yes! reason sanctions what stern fate denies:
The early prospect in the glory dies,
As the soft smiles on dying infants play
In their mild features, and then pass away.

The *Beauty* died, ere she could yield her hand
In the high marriage by the Mother plann'd;
Who grieved indeed, but found a vast relief
In a cold heart, that ever warr'd with grief.

Lucy was present when her sister died,
Heiress to duties that she ill supplied:
There were no mutual feelings, sister arts,
No kindred taste, nor intercourse of hearts;
When in the mirror play'd the matron's smile,
The maiden's thoughts were trav'lling all the while;
And when desired to speak, she sigh'd to find
Her pause offended; "Envy made her blind:
"Tasteless she was, nor had a claim in life
"Above the station of a rector's wife;
"Yet as an heiress, she must shun disgrace,
"Although no heiress to her mother's face:
'It is your duty," said th' imperious dame,
"(Advanced your fortune) to advance your name,

" And with superior rank, superior offers claim.
" Your sister's lover, when his sorrows die,
" May look upon you, and for favour sigh;
" Nor can you offer a reluctant hand;
" His birth is noble, and his seat is grand."

Alarm d was Lucy, was in tears — " A fool!
" Was she a child in love? — a miss at school?
" Doubts any mortal, if a change of state
" Dissolves all claims and ties of earlier date?"

The Rector doubted, for he came to mourn
A sister dead, and with a wife return:
Lucy with heart unchanged received the youth,
True in herself, confiding in his truth;
But own'd her mother's change; the haughty dame
Pour'd strong contempt upon the youthful flame;
She firmly vow'd her purpose to pursue,
Judged her own cause, and bade the youth adieu!
The lover begg'd, insisted, urged his pain,
His brother wrote to threaten and complain,
Her sister reasoning proved the promise made,
Lucy appealing to a parent pray'd;
But all opposed the event that she design'd,
And all in vain — she never changed her mind;
But coldly answer'd in her wonted way,
That she " would rule, and Lucy must obey."

With peevish fear, she saw her health decline,
And cried, " Oh! monstrous, for a man to pine:
" But if your foolish heart must yield to love,
" Let him possess it whom I now approve;

"This is my pleasure:" — Still the Rector came
With larger offers and with bolder claim;
But the stern lady would attend no more —
She frown'd, and rudely pointed to the door;
Whate'er he wrote, he saw unread return'd,
And he, indignant, the dishonour spurn'd:
Nay, fix'd suspicion where he might confide,
And sacrificed his passion to his pride.

Lucy, meantime, though threaten'd and distress'd;
Against her marriage made a strong protest:
All was domestic war; the Aunt rebell'd
Against the sovereign will, and was expell'd;
And every power was tried, and every art,
To bend to falsehood one determined heart;
Assail'd, in patience it received the shock,
Soft as the wave, unshaken as the rock:
But while th' unconquer'd soul endures the storm
Of angry fate, it preys upon the form;
With conscious virtue she resisted still,
And conscious love gave vigour to her will:
But Lucy's trial was at hand; with joy
The Mother cried — "Behold your constant boy —
"Thursday — was married: — take the paper, sweet,
"And read the conduct of your reverend cheat;
"See with what pomp of coaches, in what crowd
"The creature married — of his falsehood proud!
"False, did I say? — at least no whining fool;
"And thus will hopeless passions ever cool:
"But shall his bride your single state reproach?
"No! give him crowd for crowd, and coach for coach.

" Oh! you retire; reflect then, gentle miss,
" And gain some spirit in a cause like this."

Some spirit Lucy gain'd; a steady soul,
Defying all persuasion, all control:
In vain reproach, derision, threats were tried;
The constant mind all outward force defied,
By vengeance vainly urged, in vain assail'd by pride;
Fix'd in her purpose, perfect in her part,
She felt the courage of a wounded heart;
The world receded from her rising view,
When heaven approach'd as earthly things withdrew;
Not strange before, for in the days of love,
Joy, hope, and pleasure, she had thoughts above,
Pious when most of worldly prospects fond,
When they best pleased her she could look beyond:
Had the young priest a faithful lover died,
Something had been her bosom to divide;
Now heaven had all, for in her holiest views
She saw the matron whom she fear'd to lose;
While from her parent, the dejected maid
Forced the unpleasant thought, or thinking pray'd.

Surprised, the Mother saw the languid frame,
And felt indignant, yet forbore to blame:
Once with a frown she cried, " And do you mean
" To die of love—the folly of fifteen?"
But as her anger met with no reply,
She let the gentle girl in quiet die;
And to her sister wrote, impell'd by pain,
" Come quickly, Martha, or you come in vain."

Lucy meantime profess'd with joy sincere,
That nothing held, employ'd, engaged her here.

" I am an humble actor, doom'd to play
" A part obscure, and then to glide away:
" Incurious how the great or happy shine,
" Or who have parts obscure and sad as mine;
" In its best prospect I but wish'd, for life,
" To be th' assiduous, gentle, useful wife;
" That lost, with wearied mind, and spirit poor,
" I drop my efforts, and can act no more;
" With growing joy I feel my spirits tend
" To that last scene where all my duties end."

Hope, ease, delight, the thoughts of dying gave,
Till Lucy spoke with fondness of the grave;
She smiled with wasted form, but spirit firm,
And said, " She left but little for the worm:"
As toll'd the bell, " There 's one," she said, " hath press'd
" Awhile before me to the bed of rest:" (1)
And she beside her with attention spread
The decorations of the maiden dead.

While quickly thus the mortal part declin'd,
The happiest visions fill'd the active mind;

(1) [These were the very words of Mr. Crabbe's own mother during her last illness. It happening that a friend and neighbour was slowly yielding at the same time to the same hopeless disorder as herself, she every morning used to desire her daughter to see if this sufferer's window was opened; saying cheerfully, "She must make haste, or I shall be at rest before her."—See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 104.]

A soft, religious melancholy gain'd
Entire possession, and for ever reign'd:
On Holy Writ her mind reposing dwelt,
She saw the wonders, she the mercies felt;
Till in a blest and glorious reverie,
She seem'd the Saviour as on earth to see,
And, fill'd with love divine, th' attending friend to be;
Or she who trembling, yet confiding, stole
Near to the garment, touch'd it, and was whole;
When, such th' intenseness of the working thought,
On her it seem'd the very deed was wrought;
She the glad patient's fear and rapture found,
The holy transport, and the healing wound;
This was so fix'd, so grafted in the heart,
That she adopted, nay became the part:
But one chief scene was present to her sight,
Her Saviour resting in the tomb by night;
Her fever rose, and still her wedded mind
Was to that scene, that hallow'd cave, confin'd—
Where in the shade of death the body laid,
There watch'd the spirit of the wandering maid;
Her looks were fix'd, entranced, illumed, serene,
In the still glory of the midnight scene:
There at her Saviour's feet, in visions blest,
Th' enraptured maid a sacred joy possess'd;
In patience waiting for the first-born ray
Of that all-glorious and triumphant day:
To this idea all her soul she gave,
Her mind reposing by the sacred grave;
Then sleep would seal the eye, the vision close,
And steep the solemn thoughts in brief repose.

Then grew the soul serene, and all its powers
Again restored, illumed the dying hours;
But reason dwelt where fancy stray'd before,
And the mind wander'd from its views no more;
Till death approach'd, when every look express'd
A sense of bliss, till every sense had rest.

The Mother lives, and has enough to buy
Th' attentive ear and the submissive eye
Of abject natures—these are daily told,
How triumph'd beauty in the days of old;
How, by her window seated, crowds have cast
Admiring glances, wondering as they pass'd;
How from her carriage as she stepp'd to pray,
Divided ranks would humbly make her way;
And how each voice in the astonish'd throng
Pronounced her peerless as she moved along.

Her picture then the greedy Dame displays;
Touch'd by no shame, she now demands its praise;
In her tall mirror then she shows a face,
Still coldly fair with unaffecting grace;
These she compares, "It has the form," she cries,
"But wants the air, the spirit, and the eyes;
"This, as a likeness, is correct and true,
"But there alone the living grace we view."
This said, th' applauding voice the Dame required,
And, gazing, slowly from the glass retired.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

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